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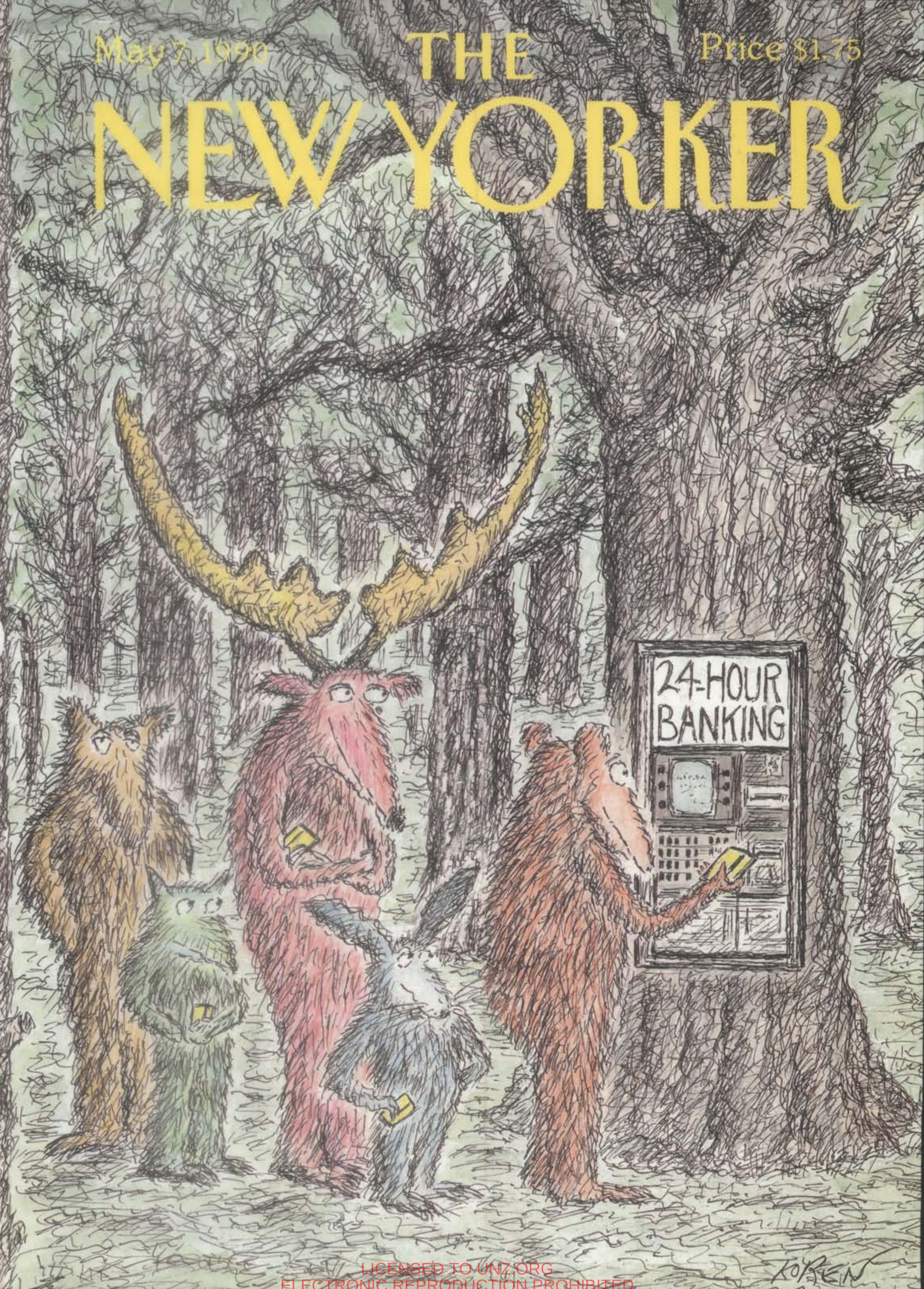
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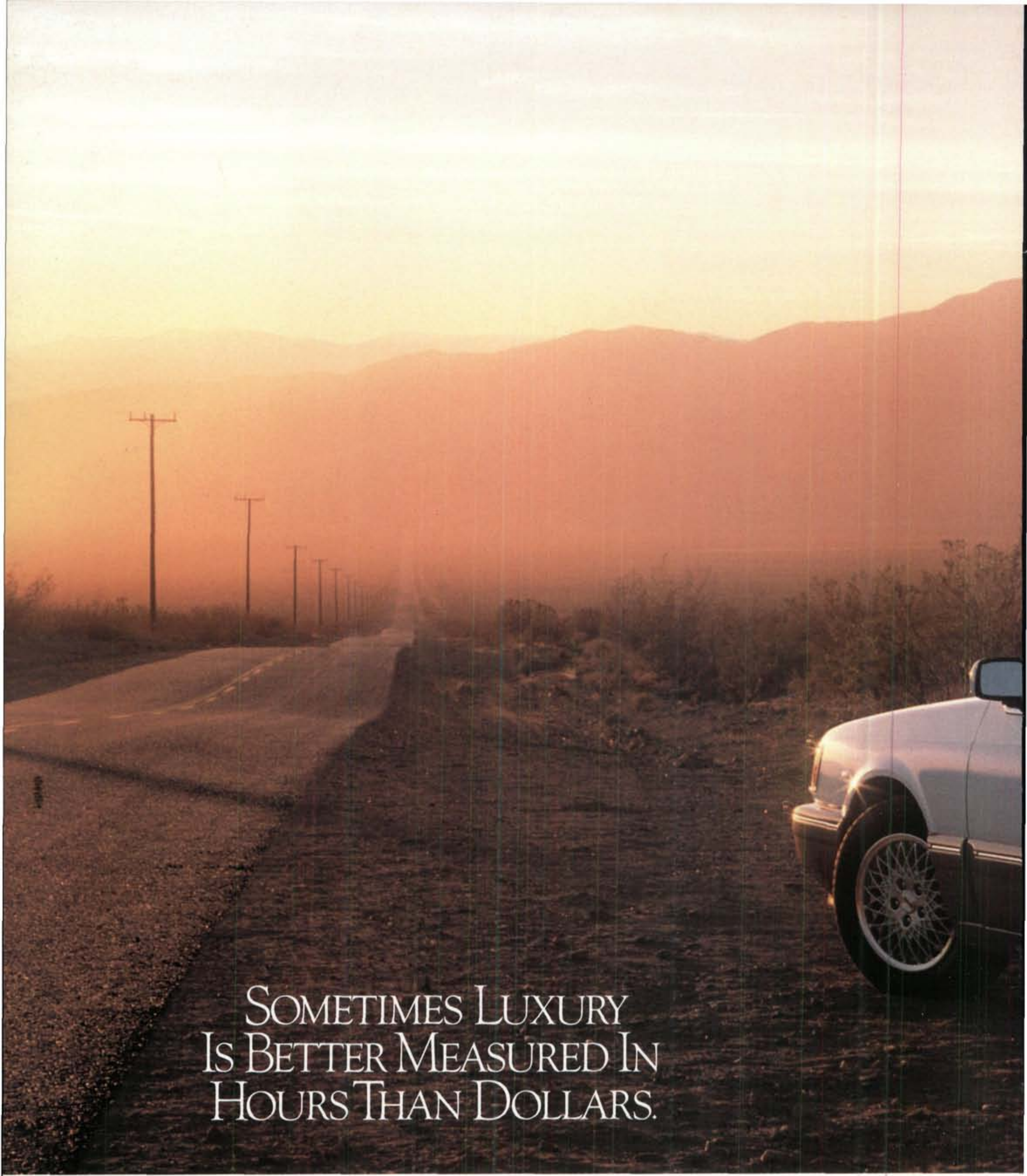
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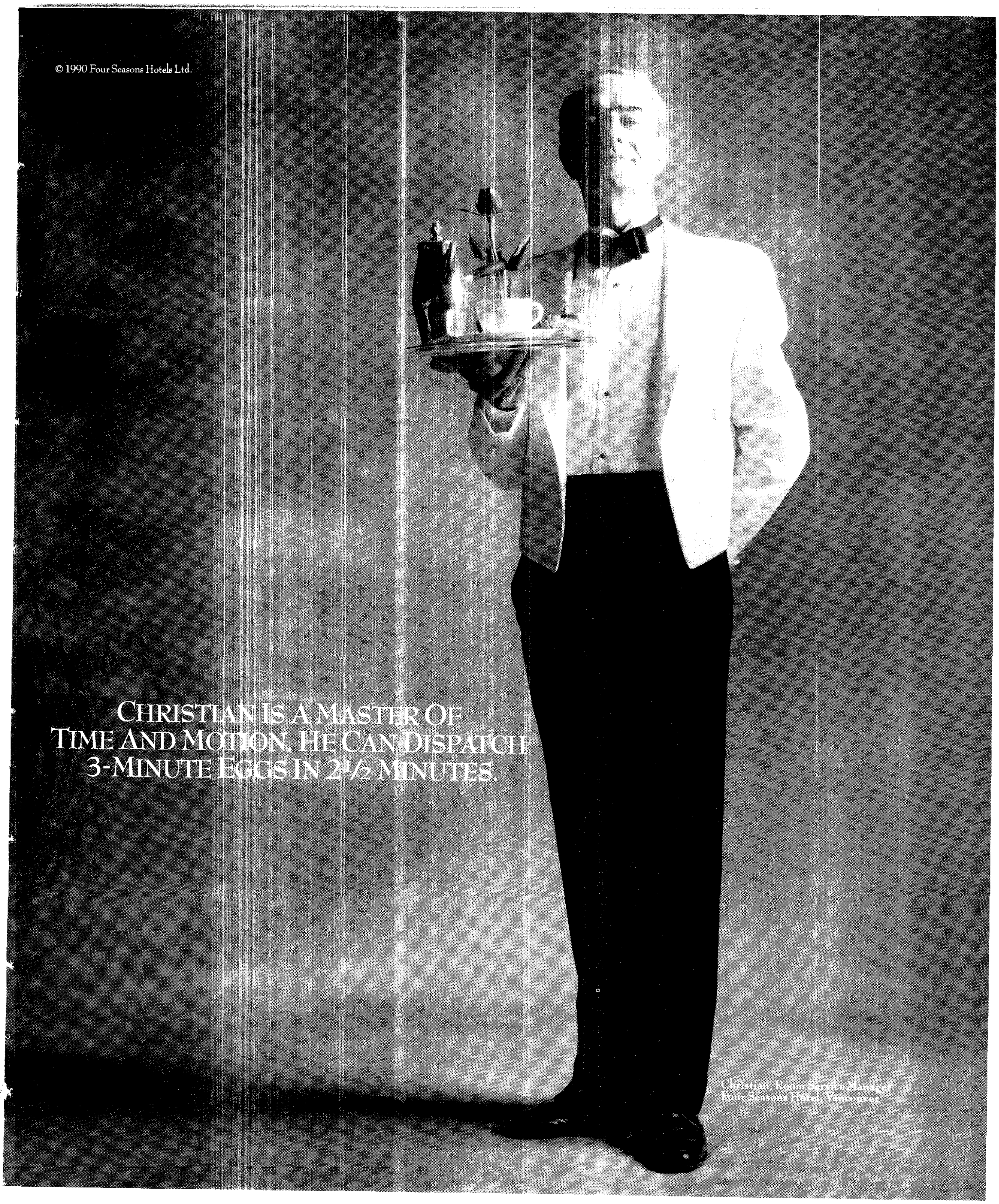

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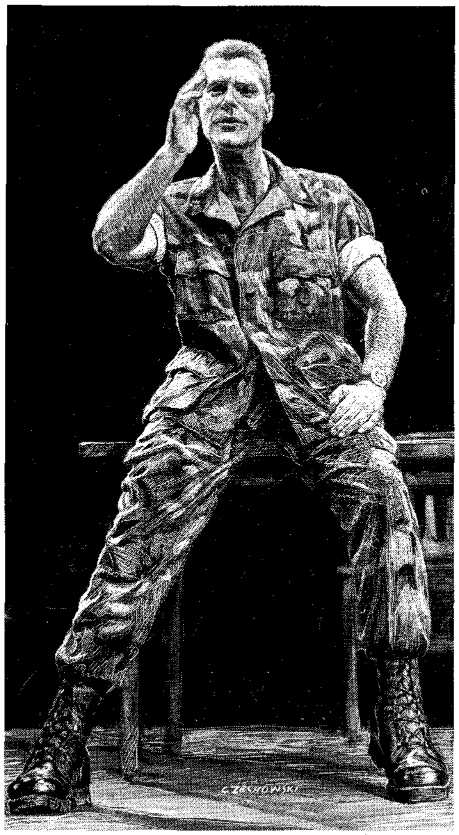
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



Stephen Lang of "A Few Good Men"

THE THEATRE

ONE of the epigraphs in the program for the London Small Theatre Company's production at the Judith Anderson (currently our favorite show in town) is from the moral philosopher Thomas Nagel: "We are not always willing or able to extricate ourselves from a position whose absurdity has become clear to us." (Actually, it says "absudity," but the general idea comes across.) Below that, a director's note, from Fiona Laird, reads "Audience, audience, don't panic."

We've fallen hard for the London Small Theatre Company, whose double bill (presented by Manhattan Punch Line through May 5) consists of a comedy revue called "Beyond Belief" (written and directed by Miss Laird) and a brilliant little adaptation of—if you *can* believe it—Aristophanes' "Clouds." The Aristophanes is the single best production of a Greek drama we've ever seen anywhere, the revue (it calls itself "a musical cabaret") an instance of the sort of silly yet sophisticated academic humor one associates with "Beyond the Fringe," Monty Python, and the plays of Tom Stoppard. What links the two productions, stylistically, is a curious brand of totally deadpan a-cappella singing, used in the cabaret show to interrupt a shamelessly absurd plot that revolves around questions of Knowing and Being, and in "The Clouds" to solve the problem of what to do with the choral odes. It's a question that has persistently dogged would-be producers of Greek drama. Miss Laird, who also writes and arranges all the company's music, draws on every imaginable form of choral singing—from church music to doo-wop. This is essentially the only liberty the production takes, apart from a rather piquant approach to visual design. (The adaptation refuses to condescend by updating the play's contemporary references.)

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6	7	8	9			

We could witter on about intelligent comedy or classics made relevant with just superlative acting and clever staging, but that wouldn't really capture the spirit of either production. The night we attended back-to-back performances, the audience was still having such a good time, at the end of a long evening, that it was only by performing a Burt Bacharach song completely straight that the company managed to get rid of us at all.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

The Cemetery Club—Eileen Heckart, Elizabeth Franz, and Doris Belack in a play by Ivan Menchell. Directed by Pamela Berlin. Previews begin May 5. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

Circle Repertory Company—Presenting **EACH DAY DIES WITH SLEEP**, by José Rivera. With Erica Gimpel, Alex Colón, and Randy Vásquez. Previews begin May 4. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Further Mo'—A musical about the demise of black vaudeville, put together by Vernel Bagneris, the man behind 1979's "One Mo' Time." In previews. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Ground People—A play by Leslie Lee, with Ron Richardson and Frances Foster, and staged by Walter Dallas. Previews through May 5. Opens May 6 at 3. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Hamlet—Kevin Kline has directed and stars in the thirteenth production of Joseph Papp's Shakespeare Marathon. Dana Ivey, Brian Murray, Diane Venora, and Josef Sommer are also in the cast. Previews through May 6. Opens May 8 at 7. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Ice Cream—A play by Caryl Churchill, first seen last year at London's Royal Court Theatre. **HOT FUDGE**, a new work by Ms. Churchill, is the curtain-raiser. Both with Jane Kaczmarek and Margaret Whitton. Previews May 1-2. Opens May 3 at 7:15. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score). Directed and choreographed by Graciela Daniele. Previews through May 5. Opens May 6 at 7. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

What a Man Weighs—A play by Sherry Kramer, with Richard Cox, Christine Estabrook, Harriet Harris, and Katherine Hiler. Directed by Carole Rothman. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Zoya's Apartment—Bronson Pinchot, Linda Thorson, and Robert LuPone have the leads in Mikhail Bulgakov's farce. Staged by the Soviet director Boris Morozov. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Accomplice—A comedy-thriller by Rupert Holmes, with Jason Alexander, Pamela Brull, Michael McKean, and Natalia Nogulich. Directed by Art Wolff. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Aspects of Love—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a sort of monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Away Alone—No one could accuse Janet Noble's sweet, feckless comedy about young Irish immigrants in the Bronx of being overly pretentious. The play is innocent, sentimental, and old-fashioned—a little like the characters it portrays—but the feeling it creates in the audience becomes infectious, a little like the laughter it inspires. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

Beyond Belief and **The Clouds**—A double bill performed by the London Small Theatre Company. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 239-0827. Closes May 5.)

By and for Havel—A pair of one-acters in revival. "By"—**AUDIENCE**—is based on an episode that occurred when Václav Havel had a menial job in a brewery; "for"—**CATASTROPHE**—is Samuel Beckett's poetic tribute to Havel when he was in prison. Together, they make an evening that is both comic and stirring. With Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway. (3/19/90) (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Carbondale Dreams—Steven Sater's trilogy about a family of Ugly-American Jews in the Midwest began life as a pair of one-acts entitled "Beth" and "Bradley." (A third, "Arnold," has since been added.) "Beth" is so full of Jewish self-loathing and hostility toward one's parents (the work reeks of autobiography) as to be unendurable. Perhaps Sater needs to be reminded that the best revenge is living well, not writing poorly. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof—As Maggie the Cat, Kathleen Turner seems in desperate straits in this limp and hapless revival of Tennessee Williams' most playable family melodrama. (4/2/90) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

A Change in the Heir—A musical by George H. Gorham and Dan Sticco, with Brooks Almy, Judy Blazer, and Jeffrey Herbst. Directed and choreographed by David H. Bell. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302.)

The Circle—Rex Harrison, Glynis Johns, Stewart Granger, and an able supporting company have raised Somerset Maugham to the heights of Sheridan and Congreve. The play is about an elderly couple who pay a visit to the wife's middle-aged son, whom she deserted thirty years before. Brian Murray directed the fine production. (12/4/89) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Closes May 20.)

City of Angels—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Closer Than Ever—This charmer amounts to an anthology of songs and sketches by Richard Maltby, Jr. (words), and David Shire (music), as sung and performed by Brent Barrett, Sally Mayes, Richard Muenz, and Lynne Wintersteller. They are a gifted quartet, and lucky to have such attractive, humorous, and tender songs to sing and words to speak. The fact that there is no amplification is an extra boon. (11/13/89) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

The Crucible—A revival of Arthur Miller's 1953 drama, with Justine Bateman, Gordana Rashovich, and Randle Mell. Directed by Gerald Freedman. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes May 13.)

Der Ring Gott Farblonjet—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company in a revival of Charles Ludlam's 1977 play. Directed by Everett Quinton. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271. Closes May 20.)

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

A Few Good Men—"Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (11/27/89) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Grand Hotel—The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show (except for a glorious, eccentric dance by Michael Jeter), but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (11/27/89) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

The Grapes of Wrath—This stage adaptation (by Frank Galati, who also directed) is the most truly adult version of Steinbeck's novel to date. It appeals to the mind rather than to the emotions; all the same, there's a cumulative effect. Don't go expecting to see John Ford or "Balm in Gilead," but expect to leave feeling as if you had. With Lois Smith and Gary Sinise. (4/2/90) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Gypsy—This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast (led by Tyne Daly, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary) so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). Trust Broadway; you'll have ample time to welcome Miss Daly when she mounts the steps and delivers her first onstage line. (12/4/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting two works in rotating repertory: **THE PRINCE OF HOMBERG,** by Heinrich von Kleist, in a translation by Douglas Langworthy (through May 25); and Eric Bentley's version of Brecht's **A MAN'S A MAN** (through May 6). (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Lettice & Lovage—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers in Peter Shaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Meet Me in St. Louis—If you like the old M-G-M musical, you probably won't like this stage version, which combines the earnest, wholesome values of the movie with an aesthetic of surpassing vulgarity. In any case, why see the show when you can rent the movie? (11/20/89) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—A production presented by the Willow Cabin Theatre Company. (Intar Stage 2, 508 W. 53rd St. 279-4200. Closes May 13.)

Mountain—Len Cariou is Justice William O. Douglas, and Heather Summerhayes and John C. Vennema play multiple roles as the people he encountered every step of the way, from his boyhood, in Washington State, through his thirty-six-year term on the Supreme Court. Though perhaps a bit over-reverent, the play, by Douglas Scott, is as interesting as the history it portrays. The acting is fine; Mr. Vennema's thumbnail Nixon is especially striking. (4/23/90) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting **LIFETIMES ON THE STREETS.** The streets are the streets of Harlem, and this "theatrical collage" is a set of monologues by Gus Edwards, who has an acute ear and imagination. As spoken and performed by the splendid actors of the company, the words evoke a way of life as it was and as it is now. Douglas Turner Ward is both director and performer. (4/13/90) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545.)

The Piano Lesson—August Wilson's new drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh, in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure, (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history), the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes—even if the subtle ensemble acting in Lloyd Richards' production is thrown out of balance by an excessive performance by Charles S. Dutton. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Prelude to a Kiss—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Mary-Louise Parker is the bride, and Timothy Hutton is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

Rain. Some Fish. No Elephants.—A comedy by Y York. (The New Theatre of Brooklyn, 465 Dean St. 1-718 230-3366. Closes May 20.)

STREET SPEAK

We've been waiting a long time for someone to show up at Speaker's Corner, on Broadway just south of Astor Place, and actually say something. But its location—in front of the Unique Clothing Warehouse—is no carefully groomed, eloquence-inspiring Hyde Park. It isn't even a corner. A few years ago, the owners of Unique decided that, in addition to offering their customers leather teddies sprouting ostrich feathers and a chance to have their bodies painted, they would provide an opportunity for discussing the issues of the day. Stan Peskett, a British artist, created the forum: now the store's façade is illustrated in flat, W.P.A. style with a cluster of people carrying a banner that reads "FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION." Above the group is the face of a man painted in mauve and green tones, which convey the intensity and ill health of one who spends many hours indoors thinking. Although the sign above his head says "SPEAKER'S CORNER" (it's recently been amended by graffiti to say "SPENDER'S CORNER") and his mouth is open, his demeanor is so fierce that he looks as if he'd devour rather than listen to anyone who set up a soapbox. That may explain why we've never seen anybody holding forth there. But the neighborhood is better for watching than for listening, anyway: the pedestals of traffic lights are decorated with mosaics of broken dishes and cracked mirrors, evoking a thousand failed restaurants, and a window of the Antique Boutique is filled with cardboard cutouts of Shirley Temple, Vincent van Gogh, and the Cowardly Lion, all dressed in leather, like a hapless motorcycle gang. Sometimes there's no need to say a word.

The Rothschilds—A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book). With a sixteen-member cast, led by Mike Burstyn. Lonny Price directed. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll—All manner of hypocrites, fakes, liars, and other ethical discards are subjected to Eric Bogosian's incomparable mimicry and wit. The evening is anything but depressing. (2/26/90) (Orpheum Theatre, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. Closes May 20.)

Some Americans Abroad—Yank Anglophilia and self-hatred among a group of academics on their department's annual theatre tour of England. The play, by Richard Nelson, would be worth seeing if only for the quality and style of the performances—particularly from Colin Stinton and Henderson Forsythe. You could do a lot worse than this well-observed and amusing comedy of manners. (So, as the record shows, could the playwright.) (2/26/90) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Spunk—George C. Wolfe's adaptation of three short stories by Zora Neale Hurston. Danitra Vance and Reggie Montgomery head the cast. Mr. Wolfe directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Tales of the Lost Formicans—Dan Butler, Lizbeth Mackay, and Rosemary Prinz are among the cast members of this play by Constance Congdon. (Apple Corps Theatre, 336 W. 20th St. 627-3624. Closes May 6.)

Tru—Robert Morse gives a deeply thought-out, accomplished performance as Truman Capote—by turns funny, bitchy, ironic, and rueful—at the end of his life and his tether. The play was written and directed by Jay Presson Allen. (1/1/90) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

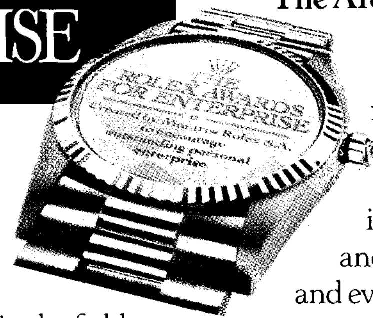
Truly Blessed: A Musical Celebration of Mahalia Jackson—A new musical written by and starring Queen Esther Marrow. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Village Light Opera Group—Presenting a brief engagement of **KISMET.** Music based on the themes of Aleksandr Borodin; book by Charles Lederer and Luther Davis. (Haft Auditorium, Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. 279-4200. Closes May 6.)

LONG RUNS

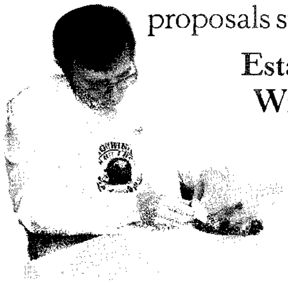
BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Arthur French star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turns thirty on May 3. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Brooke Adams. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

THE 1990 ROLEX AWARDS FOR ENTERPRISE


ROLEX AWARDS FOR ENTERPRISE
Created by Montres Rolex S.A. to encourage outstanding personal enterprise

The Rolex Awards for Enterprise were founded in 1976 to recognize the achievements of individuals whose ventures are aimed at improving our world. The awards were granted in the fields of Applied Science and Invention; Exploration and Discovery; and the Environment. For their unswerving dedication to a cause and contribution toward the common good, the five 1990 laureates each received 50,000 Swiss francs and an inscribed Rolex Chronometer. The awards, presented for the sixth time, are designed to help bring to fruition the projects of these worthy individuals.

The Spirit of Enterprise, The 1990 Rolex Awards is an illustrated book outlining the winning projects and over 250 other proposals submitted for consideration.



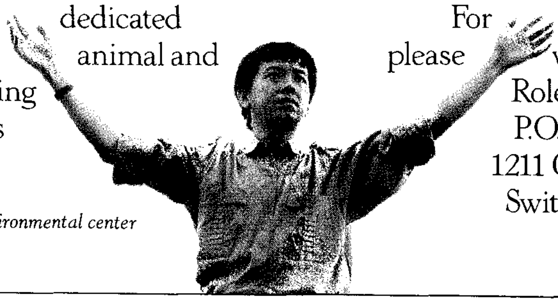
Bandaging a hedgehog

Establishing Europe's First Wildlife Teaching Hospital

Englishman Les Stocker founded the Wildlife Hospital Trust to care for injured wild birds and animals. He now wants to establish Europe's first teaching veterinary hospital to treat injured wildlife.

The First Indonesian Environmental Education Center

Dr. Suryo Prawiroatmodjo is completing construction of Indonesia's first environmental education center, dedicated to conserving threatened animal and plant species and increasing awareness of the country's ecological problems.



Lecturing at the environmental center

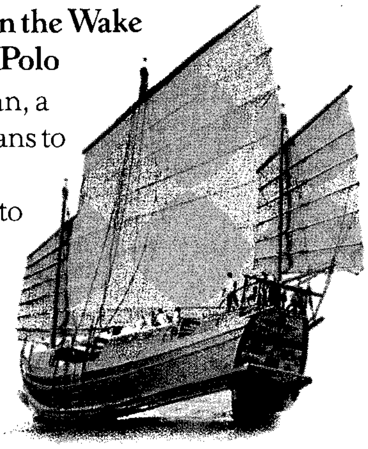
Tree nursery for planned reforestation

The Arco Iris Project: Saving the Pedra Talhada Forest in Brazil

Anita Studer of Switzerland founded the Arco Iris (Rainbow) project to reforest the largely decimated Pedra Talhada woodlands in Brazil by enlisting the support and labor of young people, officials and even former poachers.

Setting Sail in the Wake of Marco Polo

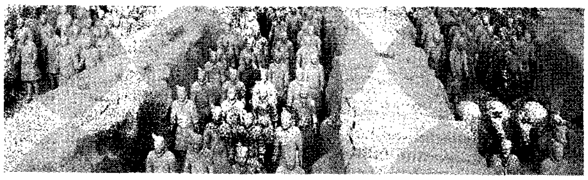
Dr. Wayne Moran, a British physician, plans to retrace Marco Polo's journey from China to Italy in a replica of a 13th-century junk. Moran will conduct studies at each port of call to compare Polo's era with today's.



The "Cocachin" under sail

Laser Restoration of the Qin Dynasty Army

Dr. John Asmus, an American research physicist, pioneered the use of lasers in art restoration. He will use the technology to preserve the colors on some of the 6,000 warriors of the Qin Dynasty terra-cotta army, unearthed in China.



Life-size, terra-cotta warriors

For additional information, please write to The Secretariat,
Rolex Awards for Enterprise,
P.O. Box 178,
1211 Geneva 26,
Switzerland.

ROLEX

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DANCE

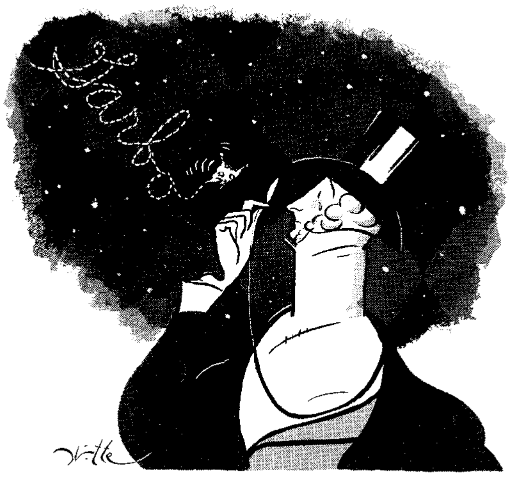
EVERYTHING about the nineteen-thirties seems touched by monumentality, and an Art Deco public palace, Radio City Music Hall, keeps the era alive in New York. Radio City remains one of the largest indoor theatres in the world, and one of the most demanding for shows that feature dance. The Rockettes—who have been the hall's leading dance troupe since 1933—are probably the ideal instruments of physical expression for the place. The piston-perfect precision of the thirty-six-dancer kick line and the way their ranks pour down a set of stairs like molten steel apotheosize an important kind of Depression-era image-making.

From 1933 to 1979, the music hall also produced an annual showpiece in which this kind of massive imagery was employed, but to a more traditionally devotional end. The name of the ceremonial tableau was "The Glory of Easter"; it was performed for several weeks each spring and was followed by a first-run movie. During the nineteen-eighties, when the hall itself was fighting to regain its importance as a New York theatre, the Easter show was dropped. This spring, however, it was revived for two weeks as part of a ninety-minute "Easter Extravaganza," with its original cathedral setting, by the future filmmaker Vincente Minnelli, and church-procession choreography, by Leon Leonidoff.

"The Easter Extravaganza," a revue made up of a prologue and eight new scenes, directed and choreographed by Scott Salmon, is really two alternating shows. The first, meant to appeal to New York sophisticates, consists of the prologue (the complete "Glory of Easter") and several spectacular dance numbers. Their charm and high style come largely from the contributions of Erté, who designed most of the sets and costumes. He was an old hand at designing for the theatre, and a former collaborator with Leonidoff. (Erté's death, at the age of ninety-seven, occurred within days of the première of "The Easter Extravaganza.") Our favorite moment came when a shaft of white light fell among the adagio couples dancing to Gershwin's "Somebody Loves Me." When such high-hat dances lose focus, the second show kicks in. Its host is Wayne Cilento, in evening dress and a cotton tail, and it features laser lighting and outsized, hip-hopping musical instruments. A few minutes less of all that might have made for a finer romance.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—May 1 at 8: "Square Dance," "Duo Concertante," and a preview of "Fearful Symmetries" (a benefit performance). . . . ¶ May 2 at 8: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ May 3 at 8: "La Source," "Fearful Symmetries" (première), and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ May 4 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Prodigal Son," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ May 5 at 2: "Concerto Barocco," "Fearful Symmetries," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ May 5 at 8: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ May 6 at 1: "Square Dance," "Prodigal Son," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ May 6 at 7: "La Source," "Songs of the Auvergne," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ May 8 at 8: "Square Dance," "Fearful Symmetries," and "Cortège Hongrois." . . . ¶ May 9 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Fearful Symmetries," and "Cortège Hongrois." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through July 1.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—Opening performances of the season, which will run through June 30. May 7 at 8: A reprise of January's fiftieth-anniversary benefit, with excerpts from thirty ballets and with film footage of the troupe's early days. . . . ¶ May 8 at 8: "Birthday Offering," "Jardin aux Lilas," "Pas de Deux," and "Brief Fling." . . . ¶ May 9 at 2: "La Bayadère (Act II)," "The Leaves Are Fading," and "Brief Fling." . . . ¶ May 9 at 8: "La Bayadère (Act II)," "The Leaves Are Fading," and "Rodeo." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)



PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY—May 1 at 8: "Esplanade," "Curbs and Corridors" (première), and "Musical Offering (A Requiem)." . . . ¶ May 2 at 8: "Roses," "Runes," and "Esplanade." . . . ¶ May 3 and May 5 at 8: "Of Bright & Blue Birds & the Gala Sun." . . . ¶ May 4 and May 9 at 8: "Polaris," "Minikin Fair," "Split Whiskers," and "Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rehearsal)." . . . ¶ May 6 at 3: "Snow White," "The Sorcerer's Sofa," "Roses," and "Syzygy." . . . ¶ May 6 at 7:30: "Images," "Curbs and Corridors," and "Musical Offering (A Requiem)." . . . ¶ May 8 at 8: "Arden Court" and "Speaking in Tongues." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through May 13.)

LAURA DEAN DANCERS AND MUSICIANS—May 1-2 at 8: "Dance," "Tympani," and excerpts from "Night" and "Spiral." . . . ¶ May 3 at 8 and May 6 at 2 and 7:30: "Magnetic," "Shaman II," and excerpts from "Night" and "Music." . . . ¶ May 4-5 at 8: "Sky Light," "Inner Circle," and "Equator." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

RITHA DEVI—Performing classical dances of India. (Murphy Center, 555 E. 90th St. May 5 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

NIGHT LIFE

ALBERT COLLINS, the blues guitarist and singer, was having sound problems at Tramps the other night (an all too common predicament on the club scene). He explained that he and his band were on their way to Europe and they weren't using their own equipment. While this situation might have ruined many another musician's evening, Mr. Collins showed that he isn't nicknamed the Ice Man for his cool sound alone: despite the technical snafus, he and the band played a heartfelt, energetic, and good-humored set. In fact, they practically tore the house down, especially during the last number, when Mr. Collins, with his horn section forming a conga line behind him, wandered from table to table while ripping through a solo. It's something of a paradox that Mr. Collins has such a Teddy-bear stage persona, because his jagged, searing guitar playing is more like what you'd expect from a grizzly. The "cool" motif, which he latched on to in the late nineteen-fifties, seems to have more to do with his penchant for ice-image song titles—"Frosty," "Sno-Cone," "Thaw Out," etc.—than it does with his sound.

Mr. Collins currently lives in Las Vegas, but his roots are pure Texas, where he was born and where he spent the forties and fifties cutting his teeth on the Houston honky-tonk circuit. His most popular early recordings (his first single, "The Freeze," came out in 1958) are instrumentals—brisk, economical numbers in which the guitar does the talking—and it wasn't until the late sixties that he became known as a singer, too. From 1978 until recently, Mr. Collins was with Alligator Records (he signed with Point Blank, a division of Virgin, a few weeks ago), where he recorded a string of successful albums. And his titles for Alligator show that he's still getting mileage out of the "cool" theme—his most recent record: "Cold Snap."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar, in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Some may cry gentrification at the sight of the pastel walls, the potted greenery, and the bar crowded with Frascati sippers, but the floor-to-ceiling windows make for some fine Broadway-viewing. A trio led by **ATILLA ZOLLER** plays on May 1; a quartet belonging to **ENRICO GRANAFEI** comes in on May 2; and sax-and-flute man **JAMES MOODY,** who played with Dizzy Gillespie in the forties and the sixties, heads up a quartet May 3-5. The Cecil Payne–Joe Carter quintet comes May 9. Music from nine. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—**CARMEN MC RAE,** who, in the fifties, was an intermission pianist at the bebop epicenter known as Minton's, in Harlem, will be holding sway here May 1-6. Her recently released album, entitled "Carmen Sings Monk," is a surprisingly effortless, rich-toned piece of work, considering how tricky and angular the pianist's music was, not to mention the fact that, as McRae puts it, "When Monk wrote these tunes, I don't think he had the human voice in mind." **JOE WILLIAMS,** an alumnus of the Count Basie orchestra, will be singing the blues here as of May 8. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. Everybody loves the **SILOS,** because they don't seem to want much. With a pair of independent efforts behind them—including the watershed record "Cuba"—the group recently released their self-titled major-label début. The album was produced by Peter Moore, who also produced the first Cowboy Junkies record. Needless to say, it's a spare, understated effort—"I'm doing the dishes/ Leave 'em in the rack to dry"—with not a few country inflections. The group will play here May 8. **BUSTER POINDEXTER,** who seems to have obtained some sort of illegal sublet on this place, will be leading his **BANSHEES OF BLUE** May 4-5 and again May 9. **SHADOWFAX** performs on May 7. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other delicacies.

LORD & TAYLOR

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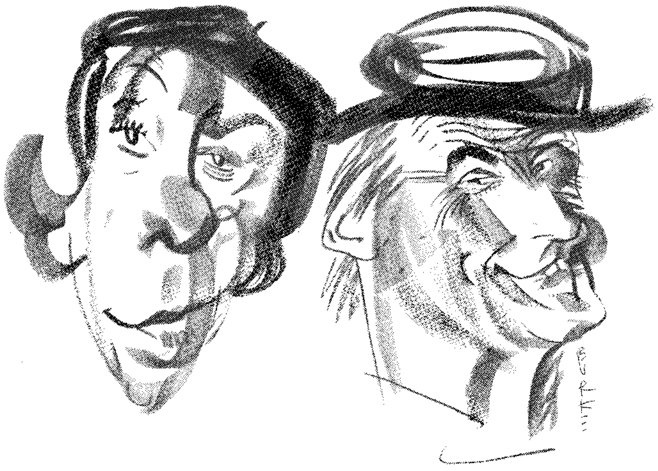
NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. Through May 5, a trio consisting of **JAMES WILLIAMS, TONY REEDUS,** and **ROBERT HURST** will be in action. **KEVIN EUBANKS** will join them for the last three days of the engagement. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—With its arch-windowed stone exterior, wrought-iron door, and no-cheap-stuff woodwork, this is a club built to last. It's also a nice place to listen to jazz, eat Caribbean food, and drink 150-proof-rum concoctions. The saxophonist, composer, and arranger **BENNY CARTER,** whose "Cow-Cow Boogie" was Capitol Records' first hit, and who was one of the leading sax men of the pre-Charlie Parker era, will begin a two week run on May 8.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to **BOBBY SHORT.** His Shortness, as he is sometimes called, first played this room in 1968, liked it, and decided to stay. Sets Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.



Imogene Coca and Sid Caesar at Michael's Pub

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by such acts as Exiter and Sweet Cheetah, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glide across the floor at a comfortable pace, lost in a nostalgic reverie; an eager young man, his tie loosened, his face perspiring, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. Swing Fever leads the proceedings on May 6, which marks the Swing Dance Society's fifth anniversary. Music from eight to midnight.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A snug, candlelit catacomb just east of Union Square. Pianist **RAY BRYANT'S** trio is in charge May 1-6; pianist **ROLAND HANNA'S** foursome begins work on May 8. Music after ten.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A pleasant hangout for white-collar trash, where you'll find cold Dixie beer, collard greens, and plenty of men who know how to wear a leather vest. As if that weren't enough, the place also features a truckload of sort-of-Southern items: a photo booth, a giant Amoco sign, an Evel Knievel lunchbox. Most nights, the buffet turns into a bandstand at nine.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables, you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. The **MINGUS DYNASTY BAND** runs through tunes by the late Charles Mingus May 1-6; pianist extraordinaire **TOMMY FLANAGAN** and a trio take command on May 8. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Indigo Blues, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A modernist night spot in the basement of the Hotel Edison. There's a glass-brick reception area, an oval blond-wood bar, and other interior-design novelties. The lighting—blue neon, in laserlike strips and wide halos—works on the eyes like a long day in front of the PC. The sardonic singer-pianist-saxophonist **EDDIE HARRIS,** who has been known to tell audiences, "I don't have any of your records, either," will be here May 4-5. Music after nine.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The duos: **CAROL BRITTO** and **MAJOR HOLLEY** May 1-5; **JEFF KEEZER** and **RAY DRUMMOND** May 6-7; and **MICHAEL WEISS** and **PETER WASHINGTON** beginning May 8. Music from about nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music-and-performance space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. The avant-rock saxophonist, composer, and Factory habitué **JOHN ZORN** presides over a mini-festival May 3-5; the cast includes **ARTO LINDSAY, TOM CORA, CHRIS COCHRANE,** and more. Guitarist **MARC RIBOT,** who will be here on May 6 (with Chris Cochrane and Catherine Jonio), has been in demand lately. Aside from leading his own group, the Rootless Cosmopolitans, he seems to show up at all the right places: on the Lounge Lizards' "Voice of Chunk," on Elvis Costello's "Spike," on the début solo record of Maria McKee (of Lone Justice), on Marianne Faithfull's soon-to-be-released live album, and on several records by Tom Waits, who has described Ribot as "an innovator who believes in compulsory distortion, rude chords, and gypsy phraseology." Music after nine.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant-and-bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. The **MARSHALL TUCKER BAND**—which boogied out of South Carolina in the seventies, scored a hit with "Can't You See?" ("what that woman's been doing to me"), and later played at Jimmy Carter's inaugural bash—comes in on May 4. The Rhode Island-based jump-blues outfit **ROOMFUL OF BLUES** performs on May 5. Music after nine. Dining.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Home of the Hoboken Sound. **SCRAWL,** a three-piece girl group from Columbus, Ohio, that plays stomping, minimal, storytelling pop-rock, will perform on May 4. May 5 belongs to **BIG DIPPER,** a quirky Boston garage band whose most recent record, "Slam," marks their major-label début.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and high-heeled ladies. **SID CAESAR AND IMOGENE COCA** are currently in residence, offering routines they made famous in Caesar's hit fifties TV series "Your Show of Shows," as well as new material. The engagement, called "Together Again," marks the fortieth anniversary of the début of "Your Show of Shows," whose writing staff included Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, Carl Reiner, and Neil Simon; according to Mr. Caesar, the reunion marks the passing of "a forty-year weekend." Show times Tuesdays through Fridays at nine; Saturdays at eight forty-five and eleven-fifteen. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret. Singer **JACK JONES**—"Lollipops and Roses," "Wives and Lovers," "Impossible Dream"—starts up on May 1. His shows begin at nine and eleven-fifteen. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steakhouse, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Mondays and Tuesdays belong to **VINCE GIORDANO & THE NIGHTHAWKS,** a spiffy outfit that re-creates the look and sound of a thirties swing band, with vintage instruments, music stands draped with felt banners, and arrangements taken from the original scores. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and perhaps the city's most international booking policy: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. First Lady of Bossa Nova **ASTRUD GILBERTO**—among whose wiser career moves was deciding, at the last minute, to record "The Girl from Ipanema" in English—performs here May 1-3. Ra Ra Machine comes in on May 4-5. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. **STEVE LACY,** a Paris-based, thoroughly modern master of the soprano saxophone, who left this country for Europe twenty years ago and rarely comes back, is leading his sextet through May 6. The group, which has undergone surprisingly few changes over the last twenty years, can also be heard on his latest release, "Anthem"—an album of asymmetrical, improvisational jazz inspired by texts by Galway Kinnell, among others. A sextet belonging to cornettist **NAT ADDERLEY** starts up on May 8. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that's fast becoming an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, the not-so-trendy disco Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is slicker than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. The Sam Brothers Five are appearing May 3-5. Music after eight.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia; the music is anything but stale. **TONY WILLIAMS,** an explosive hard-bop and jazz-rock drummer, who began his career as a teen-age wonder in the Miles Davis quintet, leads his group May 1-6. **MILT JACKSON,** the vibist, composer, and Modern Jazz Quartet member, begins a run on May 8, with a quartet. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. **NOEL REDDING,** formerly the bassist for the Jimi Hendrix Experience, performs on May 2. The West Coast guitarist **HENRY KAISER** has put out a string of records that feature such artists as Fred Frith and John Abercrombie and that often sound like a modernist psychedelic dance party. He and his band will be on hand May 8-9.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Until May 5, the room belongs to pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and bassist **CECIL MC BEE.**

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SAN FRANCISCO, DALLAS, PALM BEACH, HONOLULU, WASHINGTON, D.C.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

EVERY restaurant is a reflection of its owner. Consequently, it's no surprise that the Coffee Shop (Union Square West and 16th Street), which is owned by the same Wilhemina models who brought us Live Bait, has been jammed since the moment it opened with the athletically modelesque, wearing just the right baseball cap to go with their Gaultier vests and Girbaud khakis. They smoke like crazy, backslap like teamsters, and have graduated summa cum laude in hair sculpting. Visually, the room is easier on one's eyes than a Herb Ritts portfolio.

One's stomach won't be as happy. It's not that the food, Brazilian-inspired and executed by the chef originally hired to open 150 Wooster (until its owners decided to make it a Brazilian restaurant without Brazilian food), is no good. It's O.K. Once you get it. When you get it. If you get it.

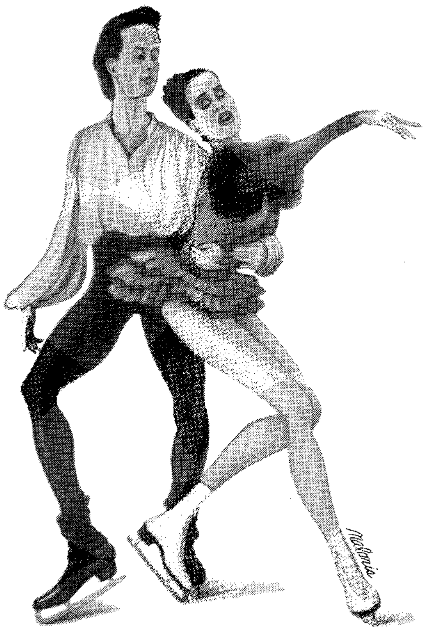
"Did you order already? Oh, that's right—the club sodas." "Your club sodas will be out in a minute." "Didn't you get those club sodas?" "I'm sorry about the delay with the appetizers." "I'm sorry. Those aren't your appetizers." "Oh, this wasn't your appetizer?" "Why doesn't everyone else start? The fritters are no good cold." "You did order the chicken, didn't you?" "I'm really sorry about this and I'd yell at the chef except he has a huge knife in his right hand and he's not in a great mood, so I'm doing the best I can do." "Yes, it would help if more people in the kitchen spoke English, since my Portuguese is so bad." "This isn't your dessert?" "I'm sorry, he forgot about the soufflé." "They're making it right now. Why doesn't everyone else start?"

With more time on our hands than food in our stomach, and with center tables pressed closer together than blondes at a go-see, we couldn't help but overhear the consternation expressed by a roving visitor alighting at the next table. "Look at the shots Peter took of me. Those aren't my breasts," she said, pointing to the obvious difference between reality and the voluptuous fantasy. "I love the shots, but those aren't my breasts. I don't know how he made them look so big. I wish I could snap my fingers and make them appear." Upon hearing us paraphrase that we wished we could snap our fingers and make our chicken breasts appear, she pulled her pictures close to her less-than-impressive chest and added, "At least your breasts will show up. When will mine?" Considering what some doctors can do in their offices in an hour, and what our chef had accomplished in two, we figured she had the edge.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

ETHYL EICHELBERGER—In final performances of his play "Dilbert Dingle-Dong (the Doomed), or A Nest Full of Ninnies." Peter Golub has written the music. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. May 3-5 at 10.)

"DRAGON'S NEST"—Lee Nagrin's new performance work includes twenty-one performers and forty twenty-six-foot-high trees imported from Maine. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Thursdays through Sundays at 7.)



Brian Boitano and Katarina Witt

BRIAN BOITANO AND KATARINA WITT—An exhibition of skating. With Rosalynn Sumners, Alexandre Fadeev, Elena Valova & Oleg Vasiliev, and others. (Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. May 5 at 8.)

"LOVE LEMMINGS"—Comedy sketches about the dating experience. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. Wednesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 8 and 10.)

VESELKA FESTIVAL AT P.S. 122—Co-produced by the pierogi and the performance people. May 3-6 at 8: Celeste Miller in a work about suburbia. . . . ¶ May 3-6 at 9:30: Tim Miller in "Stretchmarks," about a cross-country train ride. (The May 4 performance is a benefit for ACT UP.) . . . ¶ May 3-6 at 10: Peggy Pettitt's "Women Preachers." . . . ¶ May 7 at 8: A benefit performance by John Zorn. . . . ¶ May 8 at 8: Experimental videos by Latino directors. . . . ¶ May 9 at 8: Films by Lewis Klahr, Dina Katzen, Mary Filippo, and Tim Allen. . . . ¶ May 9 at 8:30: Marion Brandis, a flutist, presents an evening-length composition. With guest artists. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Through May 13.)

ART

IT may not be an accident that Chéri Samba hit town just as things took a long-awaited turn toward spring, or that his first, five-day visit to New York—for the opening of his show at the Annina Nosei gallery (100 Prince Street; through May 15)—dovetailed so perfectly with Earth Weekend. After all, we first saw Chéri's paintings last summer in Paris, where they created a stir in a big international exhibition called "Magiciens de la Terre" ("Magicians of the Earth"). This artist's paintings are nothing if not earthly. In fact, they have all the intensity of purpose of a Maypole dance. But this thirty-three-year-old from Zaire is no mere reveller or unmoored bacchant. He is a morality painter, and yet his vital, mordant, often hilarious parables of daily life in the capital city of Kinshasa are free of puritanical judgment and prudish evasion.

The communicative clarity of Chéri's paintings, along with their unaffected brilliance of color and frequent use of text, suggests the influence of both popular comic strips (he used to draw for a local newspaper, and his first exposure in the West, eight years ago in Paris, was as a guest cartoonist for *L'Actuel*) and West African designs and textiles. His powers of observation, however, and the dramatic complexity of his ribald scenes may make you think of any number of other precedents, from Bruegel to Warhol, from Rabelais and Voltaire to Sartre.

Chéri's most frequent themes are perils to health and learning, the dangers of sexual irresponsibility and infidelity, and the corrupting powers of cash. In one painting, four figures are trapped in a room, flailing desperately at mosquitoes (carriers of malaria, which, according to Chéri, kills more Africans than AIDS does), while in another work a group of cavorting schoolchildren make balloons out of *capotes* (condoms) that are being hurled recklessly from the windows of a "honeymoon" motel called the Hotel Prudence. In one small, lovely wordless painting, the image of a wandering eye, with a dripping faucet and a blossoming flower, tells male viewers to cultivate their own gardens. But the most lurid work concerns a young painter from Zaire who goes to Paris, makes a bit of money, and must thereafter cope with hangers-on, con artists, and the temptations of shopping. Chéri Samba, you might note, kept his visit to our town quite short.

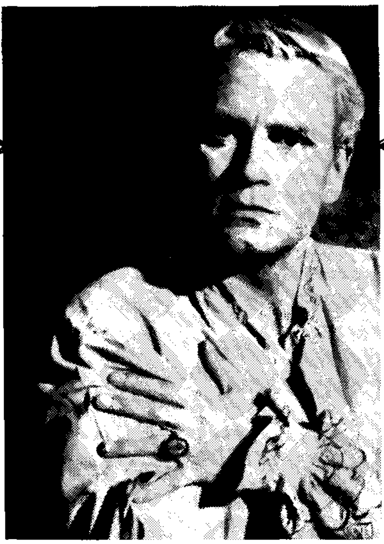
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—No artist of this century could match Louis Comfort Tiffany's decorative creations in glass, bronze, and mosaic, but this show of lamps, chandeliers, windows, and ceramics does little more than confirm the razzle-dazzle taste of the marketplace: the emphasis is on the garish, gaudy extravaganzas—the Art Nouveau updates of Victorian bad taste. The featured lamps, for instance, are the rarest ones, which are usually the trickiest—and sometimes the tackiest. Still, there is a glorious "Dragonfly" chandelier in deepest blue and green, with glass globules attached, and a "Hydrangea" chandelier, whose sophisticated massing is articulated with magnificent coloration. The experimental surfaces of a "Cypriote" vase make it look like a chunk of the moon, and the "Lava" vases are fluidity itself; these more humble masterworks still look fresh. . . . ¶ "Folon's Folons" is the self-explanatory title of a slim, simple show of works—fifty-odd watercolors, plus about a dozen found or transformed objects—made and owned by the well-known illustrator Jean-Michel Folon. Through June 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—Throughout this century, it has seemed that every kind of abstract painting, even the most radical, has been coöpted by commercial design. What a pleasure, then, to see an inversion of this formula in a small exhibition of fabric samples by Gunta Stölzl, the Bauhaus master weaver, and her student, the perhaps better-known Anni Albers. Both designers took advantage of the period's industrial advances and applied a purist approach to the technology of weaving to create undeniable classics. Stölzl and Albers helped form the craft tradition of the Bauhaus, where the distinctions between fine and applied art were blissfully blurred. . . . ¶ "Photography Until Now," a show of nearly three hundred works, examines the technological, commercial, and creative developments that have shaped the medium over the past century and a half. Through May 29. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—In "New Sculpture 1965-75:



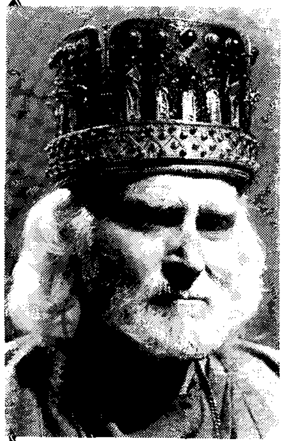
HAMLET

To TV or not to TV?

BRIDESHEAD REVISITED

That is the question Olivier wrestled with. Finally, the master stage actor made the leap. Whether king or common man, on big screen or small, he always brought down the house.

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF



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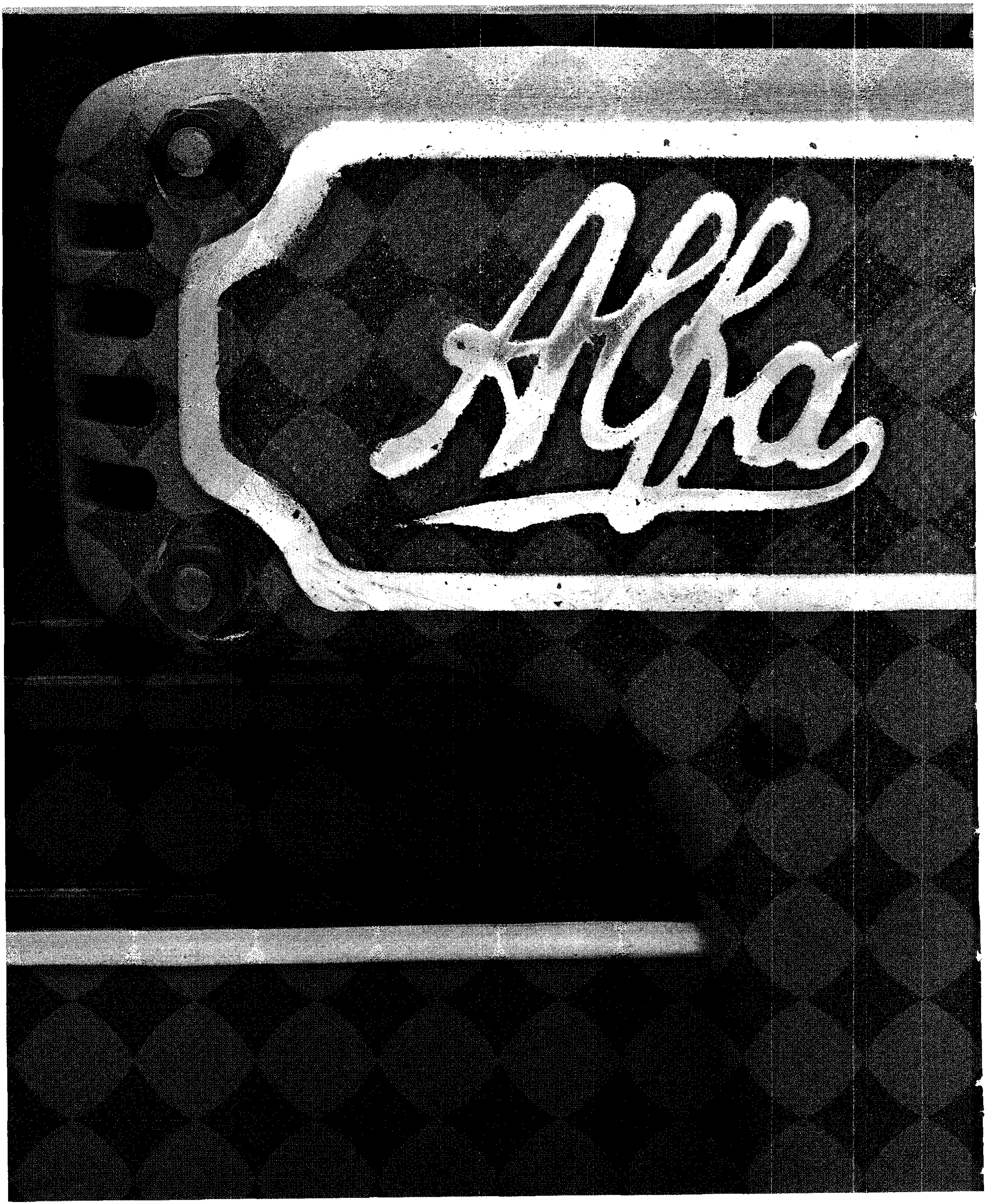

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"Between Geometry and Gesture," marvel of cool panache follows marvel of drop-dead elegance—all sprawled in perfect, if at times narcissistic, indolence over two monumental floors. The radical spirit of these works by Alan Saret, Lynda Benglis, Barry Le Va, Keith Sonnier, the late Robert Smithson, Bruce Nauman, Joel Shapiro, Richard Serra, Richard Tuttle, and the late Eva Hesse has apparently evolved into a state of profound and impeccably pomaded art-historical grace. The many triumphant pieces here have not lost their potency; on the contrary, they now appear seminal. Through May 20. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A show that documents African-American life as represented in American art (portraits, genre scenes, history paintings) between 1750 and 1940. Included are works by Joshua Johnson, Thomas Eakins, and Jacob Lawrence. Through June 25. . . . ¶ "Czech Modernism: 1900-1945." There are some electrifying paintings in this show and a healthy and welcome selection of drawings, prints, and books, all of which give a strong sense of a vital, nearly volcanic exchange of ideas. Through May 7. . . . ¶ A small selection of Tiffany floor and table lamps, along with close to thirty glass vases. Through June 25. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—More than a hundred weavings by Lenore Tawney, including pieces with feathers, shells, and paper, from the fifties through the eighties. Through June 17. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—"Clear as Crystal, Red as Flame" is an excellent primer on glassmaking in China from the fourteenth century through the early twentieth. It illustrates the native traditions of the craft, as well as the methods the Jesuits introduced when they centralized the industry in China—particularly their cameo-carving techniques, which developed into the highly prized Peking glass. Curiously, glass seems to be the only medium the Chinese used to mimic other materials. On view are vessels that look like porcelain, beads that approximate stones, and vases that ape celadon ware; the last have the lovely inner glow that can be achieved only with glass. Through June 16. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—An examination of the Danish porcelain industry from 1760 to the present, including vases, figures, and original pieces from the first Flora Danica table service, on loan from the Danish Royal Family. . . . ¶ Fabrics designed by large textile companies or by individual artisans in the past decade are presented on a grand scale—floor-to-ceiling lengths of cloth, for instance, and dramatic walk-through environments. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—A loan show from Düsseldorf of paintings and drawings by German artists whose works protested against the First World War and the Weimar Republic. The best known of the thirty-nine artists represented are Otto Dix, Käthe Kollwitz, and Max Ernst. Through May 23. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—Cynthia Carlson's engaging, playful, and smart show consists of re-creations of many of the site-specific installations she made throughout the eighties. Most of the works are structured around patterns—thick painted flowers, wood plaques of architectural details, delicate drawings of weeds, a wall of painted fish. There's a sombre quality behind the decorative playfulness, amplified in the most recent works: an installation of curved-edge drawings of monumental tombstones that manages to be memorial rather than funereal, and an especially penetrating wall drawing with reliefs inspired by the makeshift shrines left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, in Washington, D.C. Through May 27. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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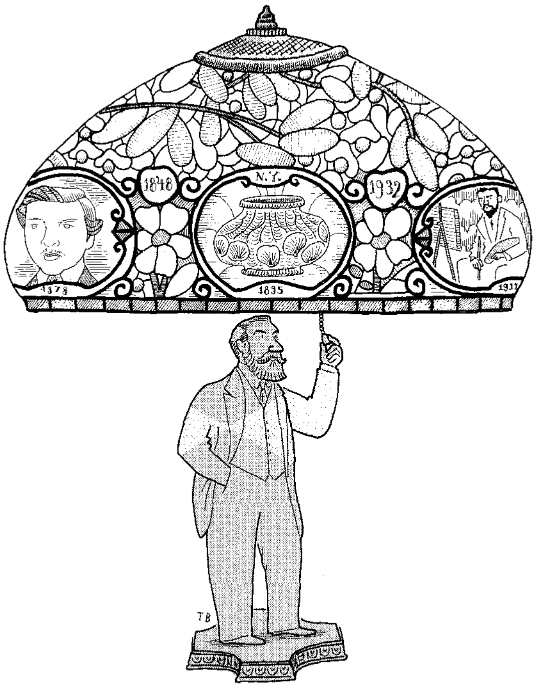
6	7	8	9			

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—This show of contemporary sub-Saharan African paintings, sculptures, and collages by nine artists from Ghana, Senegal, and elsewhere, should inspire serious rethinking of such issues as cultural imperialism and the function of art within a society. Through May 6. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)



Louis Comfort Tiffany at the Met and at the Brooklyn Museum

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Hans Arp (1886-1966)—Collages, wood reliefs, bronzes, marbles, watercolors, and drawings from the fifties and sixties by the important Dadaist. (Hans to some, Jean to others.) The very lateness of these works in Arp's career constitutes the newsworthy aspect of the show. But, unfortunately—with the exception, perhaps, of a few biomorphic and figurative works on paper that are quite charming—they are simply smoother, weaker reprises of the earlier, epochal stuff. Through June 2. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

Vincent Gallo—Paintings on found metal, with small yet monumentalized bowls of fruit lovingly, romantically, and somewhat violently scratched into the surfaces of the distressed-metal sheets. Through May 19. (Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Jackson Pollock (1912-56)—Eight large "black enamel paintings" and a group of works on paper, including notebook drawings, make for an extraordinarily good show. For one thing, it is an enormous relief to walk in and not find drip paintings. The paintings are full of speeding calligraphic lines, blotches, Tachiste stains, action, and, yes, drips. But they are also implicitly figurative and specifically psychological (anxious, fraught, valiant, and probably paranoid), and in their compositions we immediately sense Pollock's deep admiration for and involvement with the tradition of history painting from, say, David and Delacroix up to Thomas Hart Benton and Orozco, with whom Pollock worked during the W.P.A. era. Through June 2. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Short List—**Juan Bordes,** Kouros, 23 E. 73rd St. (through May 26); **Donald Sultan,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through May 24).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Arnulf Rainer—A large group of paintings on photographs or on old engravings depicting scenes from Shakespeare. Rainer's embellishments, as usual, consist of abstract smears of paint over existing imagery. Yet many of these works have an offhand charm and, especially when it comes to the history plays and to "Cymbeline," considerable poetic nuance. Through June 2. (Ulysses, 41 E. 57th St.)

Robert Ryman—This painter of white brushstrokes has come to "represent" pure painting and is being treated as if he were an endangered species. But such currently popular readings miss the subtle wit of this workmanlike artist, who violates the purity of a painted rectangle by putting bolts through it or by breaking a white field with a brute, autobiographic "image," such as the letter "R" or the number "89." There are strong works here—particularly some of the large square ones—but these paintings of vaguely edged geometric shapes that ignore the strict geometry of their supports have yet to reveal their mysteries. Through May 8. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

"Favolosi 50s"—Italian art and design of the fifties, displayed as equals. With the exception of a Manzoni, framed in Plexiglas as if it were an alien from another planet—which in this company it is—the paintings are pure kitsch. It's the decorative items—vases, furniture, and lighting fixtures—that are elegant and refined, more sculptural than the sculpture. There's a healthy selection of the mammoth glass vases Flavio Poli designed for Seguso in rich, saturated colors; a row of sleek Inciso vases by Venini; a pair of auditorium seats designed by the wildly sublime Carlo Mollino; and even a Lambretta motor scooter. There are no really key pieces here—just a lot of good, protominimal fun. Through May 5. (Daverio, 41 E. 57th St.)

Short List—**Anne Abrons** and **Dan Rizzie,** Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St. (through May 16); **Dennis Adams,** Kent, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 8); **Benny Andrews,** Deutsch, 29 W. 57th St. (through May 23); **James Aponovich,** Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 23); **Larry Brown** and **Mattie Berhang,** Lamagna, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 26); **Helen Frankenthaler,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 19); **Arnold Friedman,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 26); **Gilbert & George,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 2), and Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, starts May 2); **Bryan Hunt,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through May 26); **Julian Schnabel,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through June 29); **Philip Smith,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 2); **Joyce Treiman,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 19); **William Wegman,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 2); **Tom Wesselmann,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 2).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Tony Berlant—Large collages made up of small strips of folding TV trays, cookie tins, and other sources of metal, tooled into place with thousands of tightly spaced steel brads. There's great style and wit to these landscapes and scenes of boats on the water—which are the craft-kit version of Warhol's "paint by numbers" paintings—and a sophisticated contrasting of the wide sweeps of imagery with the obsessively tight means of production. But in the end the pictures themselves offer so little to ruminate over that the experience ends in a big "So what?" Through May 19. (Louver, 130 Prince St.)

David Bowes—Acrylic paintings that feature images—a chinoiserie vase, the model of a Roman ruin, a figure that could be an Elizabethan sibyl—against painted patterned backgrounds. Despite their dry feel, these works are almost interesting. Through May 19. (Baghoomian, 555 Broadway.)

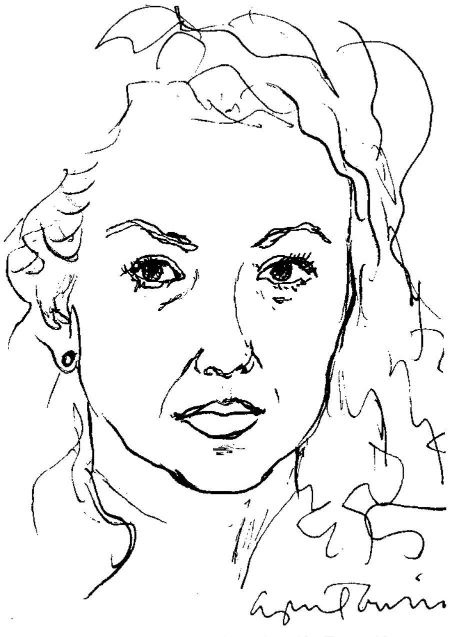
Alberto Burri—Very accomplished paintings, from the early eighties, on painted Cellotex in beige, black, and orange by the somewhat anomalous Italian. Their primary forms with curved edges demonstrate a faith in abstraction one usually associates with Motherwell, Youngerman, and the like. Through May 26. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

Gregory Botts—Large and very peculiar cruciform oil paintings that are both awful and compelling. The colored vertical panels depict weepy sunflowers and winter moons set against idyllic landscapes, and the black-and-white horizontals that bisect them contain landscape elements presented as symbols. There's a cartoonish quality to all the generalized depictions, but the mood—a kind of mourning for the sublime—is anything but silly. Through May 26. (Plumb, 81 Greene St.)

Joel Fisher—Each of the sculptural works in this show is determined by the shape of fibres found in the artist's handmade paper; the artful, three-dimensional interpretation of these forms can be geometric or organic, or whatever else the artist is inspired to do. The sculptures are from 1979 to 1982 and are somewhat dated. Some of them are installation-oriented; many are reminiscent of recognizable forms (a hoof, a drip). The most compelling ones are less deliberate versions of the small, densely packed sculptures by the other Joel (Shapiro). Through May 31. (Cadot, 470 Broome St.)

Futura 2000—As a graffitist, Futura—with his highly sophisticated, atmospheric abstract style—was in a class by himself. His newest paintings no longer feature the distant explosions of smoky paint in rapturous colors that he used to do so well. Instead, his recent abstract galaxies, which include an occasional oil-rig shape, are rendered in black, white, and only one or two colors—a combination difficult for a colorist to pull off. The paintings are still quite beautiful, but they no longer seem to contain mysteries one might understand better over time. Through May 5. (Briet, 558 Broadway.)

April Gornik—This show of about a dozen large meteorological landscapes is the artist's strongest in many years. In these portraits of "pure" weather, Gornik sets about to control the elements in at least two different ways. First, she subjects the most dramatically various climatic conditions imaginable—ominous clouds, cosmic moonbeams, Biblical floods, etc.—to the neutralizing effects of her cool, level, proficient, and meticulously withdrawn painting technique. Then, quite perversely, she makes these even-keeled sublimities serve big thematic and historical ends. Scenes of certain kinds of weather, for instance, are implicitly didactic studies of the Romantic and the Wagnerian, while others propose the platonic constructs of, say, seventeenth-century French neoclassicism. Gornik's work is exemplary in its lucidity—which is no small feat, given the scale of her endeavor. Yet she seems to be enamored of academicism itself, and perhaps for this reason her work is apt to leave one with a little lurking doubt: O.K. . . . I get the picture . . . but *now* what? Through May 26. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)



Self-portrait by April Gornik

Raoul Hague—Consistency is the operative word in this exhibition of large, well-carved, but somewhat mute wood sculptures—both figurative and abstract—from 1947 to 1989. Through May 12. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

Mike Kelley—Kelley has strewn bed throws on the gallery's main, ground-level floor, where the ambience is of an abandoned foundlings' ward in which shabby playthings, now animated, have taken over. The blankets and afghans, referred to as "arenas" by the artist, function as playgrounds for toy tableaux of stuffed animals and yarn toys. Downstairs, in wall reliefs such as "Four Sock Dolls" and "Double Flaccid Cat," the yarny critters fully realize their destinies as fetishes and objects of psychosexual parody. Through May 12. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Leonard Koscianski—Mythic-type paintings of fire, ferocious snarling canines, and the kind of canyon one might have found on a head-shop wall. The works are very earnest, but they depict worlds that have been portrayed at least as well in B movies and on album covers and posters. Through May 5. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Peter Nagy—The black-and-white works in this show look like prints but are presented as paintings. They are monuments to mixed signals. They engage in a discussion about the charting of history but do so in an adamantly superficial way—equating Egyptian hieroglyphs with Yves Saint Laurent logos, for example. They are graphically compelling but lack the personal touch one has come to expect from paintings. Through May 5. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

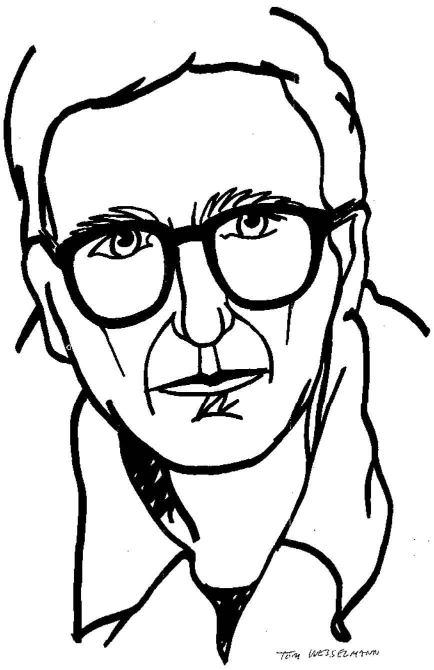
Miriam Schapiro—When this key figure in feminist art tries to aerate her paintings with Matissean expanses of color, the breath seems to evaporate. But when Schapiro fills a single canvas with more elaborate fabric, lush painted foliage, and tropical-garden colors than anyone could imagine possible, she manages to create an airy, electrifying scene. The struggle between these two paradoxical tendencies is evident here. The successful results of this tension—a painting of a majestic Frida Kahlo in her floral raiments is the true knockout—are so good that they more than make up for the unsuccessful. Through May 5. (Steinbaum, 132 Greene St.)

Andrew Spence—New oil paintings by an artist whose clean, flat, abstract works are consistently good-looking, intelligent, and unexciting. These have schematic, quasi-Constructivist designs that correspond to such real-world models as a remote control, subway doors, and a tent. Through May 12. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Hiroshi Teshigahara—The filmmaker, ikebana master, and artist has created two canopied corridors out of arching, split bamboo. They are broad yet intimate boulevards that seem better suited to a fashion show than to an art gallery. Organic, clay sculptures placed at various points around the installation fail to impress. Through May 12. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)

James Turrell—A truly awe-inspiring exhibition. From a distance, the main installation looks like a deep-purple rectangle painted on the wall of a darkened room. As one approaches it and one's eyes adjust to the low light levels, the rectangle becomes a dematerialized area of deeply saturated light, a palpable, slightly pulsing, slightly claustrophobic space. The mass, color, and depth of this "rectangle"—actually a window—keep changing. Sticking one's head through the window is like entering a Rothko. All that exists is the void, you, and this intensely colored, jaw-dropping light. Through May 31. (SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St.)

Michele Zalopany—Big new charcoal drawings. Zalopany is an interesting and talented artist whose individual pieces are still a bit overdependent on subject matter. When *what* she depicts is mysterious—hard-to-place period interiors, for instance, or scenes that suggest ineffable hotel fantasies or theatrical décors—so are her representations, and when her subject is literal so is the work. This show includes one very ambitious work that is wonderfully hard to figure out. It looks like an unusual two-tiered perspective of an industrial laundry on an epic scale—there are clothes on conveyor belts and pulleys. It has a nightmarish magic. Through May 19. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)



Self-portrait by Tom Wesselmann

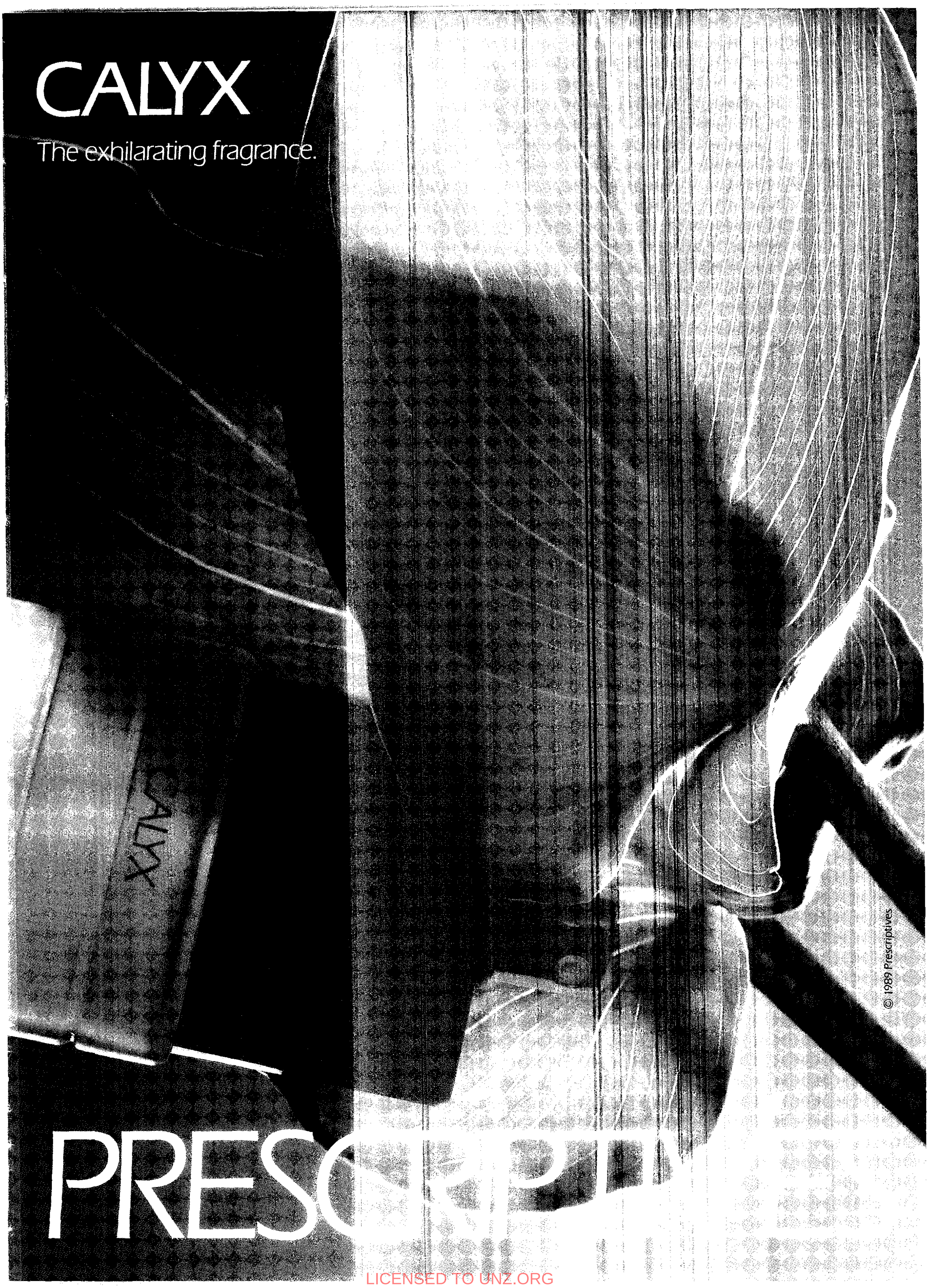
Short List—**Dennis Ashbaugh**, Kasmin, 580 Broadway (through May 8); **Dotty Attie**, P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through May 12); **Mary Boochever**, Newburg, 580 Broadway (through May 9); **Alan Davie**, Gimpel, 415 West Broadway (through May 26); **Günther Förg**, Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. (through May 26); **Hamish Fulton** and **Alice Aycock**, Weber, 142 Greene St. (through May 19); **Federico Guzmán**, Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through May 26); **Jane Haskell** and **Susanne Muel**, A.I.R., 63 Crosby St. (through May 12); **Clinton Hill**, Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through May 16); **Perry Hoberman**, Postmasters, 80 Greene St. (through May 19); **Alfredo Jaar**, Brown, 560 Broadway (through May 26); **Donald Judd**, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through May 26); **Dennis Oppenheim**, Gibson, 568 Broadway (through May 26); **David Rabinowitch**, Flynn, 113 Crosby St. (through June 30); **Rene Ricard**, Petersburg, 130 Prince St. (through May 23); **Takako Saito**, Harvey, 537 Broadway (through May 19); **Chéri Samba**, Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through May 15); **Jane Schneider**, Kelly, 591 Broadway (through May 5); **Cary Smith**, Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway (through May 19); **Haim Steinbach**, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through May 19); **Cecilia Vicuña**, Exit Art, 578 Broadway (through May 26); **Michael Young**, Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St. (through May 26).

OTHER GALLERIES

John Chamberlain—Low-lying, horizontal pieces from the artist's rarely exhibited "Gondola" series, among the most lyrical and animated works by one of our best sculptors—traditionally speaking. Through June 17. (Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St. Opens at noon, Thursdays through Sundays.)

Alice Neel (1900-84)—This is the first time Neel's very homemade-looking etchings and lithographs have been the subject of a show. Like her paintings, these portraits never look exactly like their sitters, yet they capture a charged exchange between artist and subject that at times brings to mind a deer frozen by a pair of headlights. The show includes Neel's first print, her last print, and many in between, including several of her granddaughter, Olivia, whose personality is somehow granted free rein, a privilege granted to no other subject. Through May 31. (Sragow, 73 Spring St. Opens at 1.)

Charles Saxon (1920-88)—Original watercolors for *New Yorker* covers, plus cartoons and sketchbooks. Through June 29. (Butler Library, Columbia University, 6th floor, Broadway at 114th St. Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 4:45.)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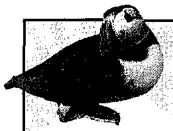

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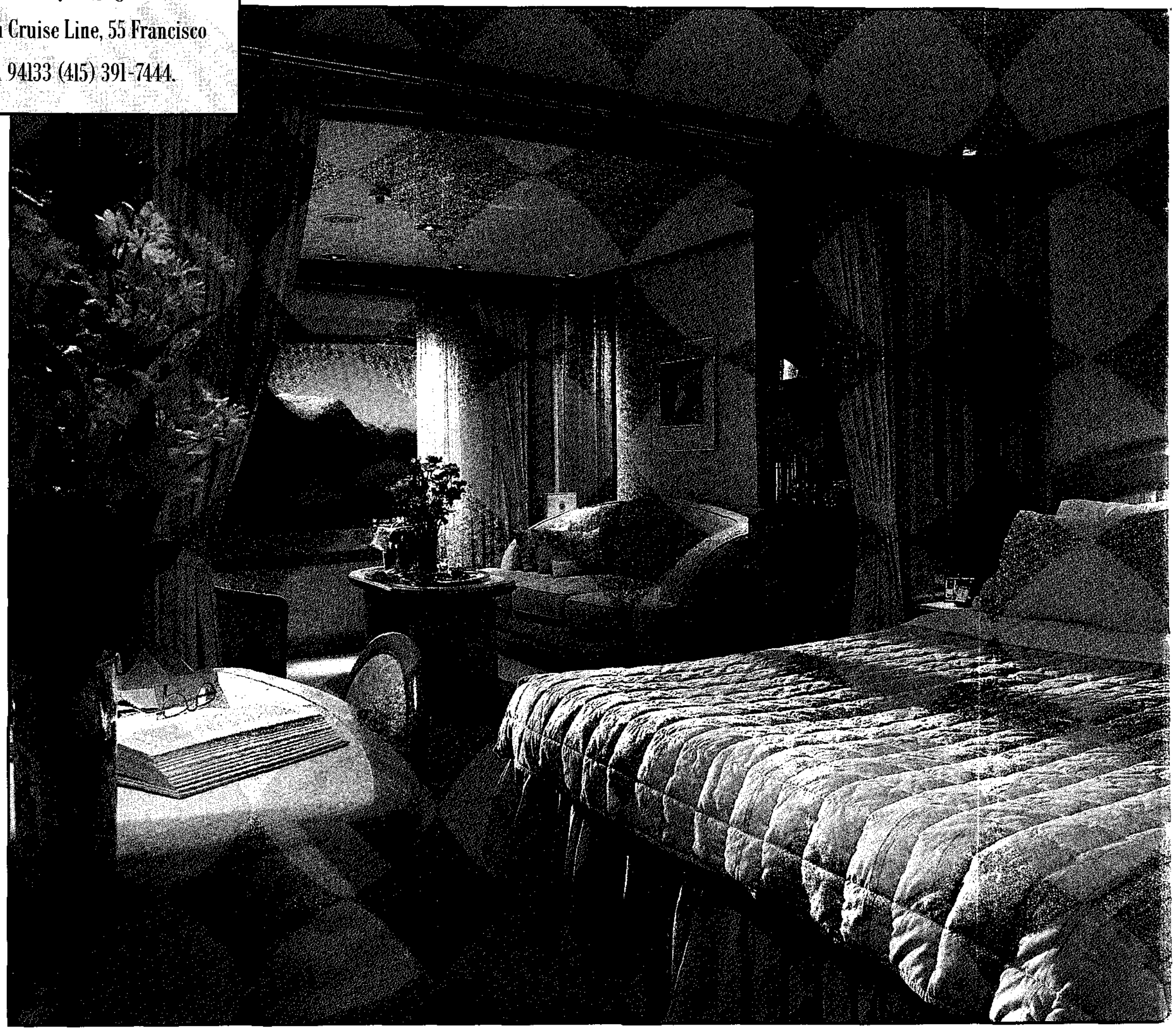

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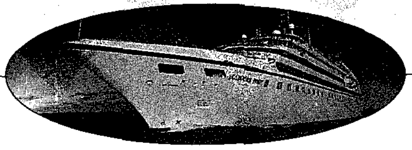

SEABOURN
CRUISE LINE

THE AMERICAS • SCANDINAVIA EUROPE • THE MEDITERRANEAN

NORWEGIAN REGISTRY

This Summer Why Not Fill Your Life With Peaks And Valleys.

PHOTOGRAPHY

THE International Center of Photography Midtown is featuring retrospectives of the work of two women whose photographs have been around for decades but who have only recently been given the attention they deserve—Lee Miller and Marion Post Wolcott. Neither turns out to be a visionary, but each produced a various and fascinating body of work, with real gems, and shockers, among their inventories.

Wolcott's exhibition is the first large show she's had in New York. The photographs she took during the Depression, under the auspices of the Farm Security Administration, add to our vision of rural America of that time—a portrait mainly formed by the pictures of such photographers as Walker Evans, Russell Lee, and Margaret Bourke-White. Other pictures that we found memorable are her most personal shots. There's a triptych of her family that's full of warmth and feeling; one of the three photographs is of Wolcott's son standing on top of a haystack—a wonderful image about having the world at your feet.

The Miller exhibition, which has been travelling around the country for some time now, is proof of the remarkable life she led, of the fantastic company she kept, and of the role she played in documenting both the most creative and the most horrible aspects of twentieth-century history. Miller's concentration-camp photographs bear witness to human evil and superhuman courage. And her pictures of artists are warm and knowing. Among these are photographs of her onetime lover and mentor Man Ray, and also photographs of her husband, the painter Roland Penrose. There is a photograph of Penrose in bed with mumps, his head wrapped up, his eyes glazed behind his glasses. If you want to see a picture of a grown man caught by the unexpected, this is it.

Jeanne Dunning—A small, funny, startling show of bold color photographs: closeups of extravagantly healthy hair, of the backs of well-coiffed heads, and, in tondo format, of a face with a swollen cheek that is probably just the result of a roving tongue. These are technically intense works with an effortless and subtle sense of the grotesque. The show continues through May 5. (Feature, 484 Broome St.)

Irving Penn—An exhibition of works from 1948 to 1971 by a photographer who has re-created the notion of fashionability time after time. Through May 5. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Short List—**tina barney**, Borden, 560 Broadway (through May 24); **bill brandt** and **graham nash**, Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (through June 16); **victor friedman**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens Saturdays at noon, through May 26); **william klein**, Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 26); **david lachapelle**, Trabia, 54 Greene St. (through May 12); **lee miller** (through June 10) and **marion post wolcott** (through June 24), International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8); **eliot porter**, Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through May 5); **sam samore**, American Fine Arts, 40 Wooster St. (through May 5); **jan staller**, Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through May 23); **doug and mike starn**, Stux, 155 Spring St. (through May 26).

MUSIC

RUSSELL SHERMAN has said unkind things about New York in interviews—people piled on each other like ants, urban problems out of all proportion to the value of living in a city in the first place, that sort of thing. But he comes to visit pretty regularly, and we like to hear him perform, because in a time of relative sameness among pianists he is, relatively and unostentatiously, different. Mr. Sherman is one of the few artists who have done more than just complain about the dulling grind of jet-set concert life, and perhaps that is why we don't mind his reflections on city life, why we even take them seriously. He interrupted a burgeoning virtuoso career more than a quarter century ago to spend time teaching and studying, and at its best his playing really does sound like the work of a calmer thinker, a more rested (but still questing and hardheaded) spirit than that of several other pianists whose skills and interests he shares.

Mr. Sherman will be performing Beethoven at the Metropolitan Museum on Thursday, May 3. Beethoven (or, alternatively, Liszt) is what he often plays. His program is not at all unusual: two famous and "big" sonatas (Opus 109 and the "Appassionata") and two thoughtfully chosen and less often heard ones (Opus 7, with its hints of Schubert, and Opus 14, No. 1, with its glimpses of Rossini).

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Final performances of the season. **das rheingold**, with Mari-Anne Häggander, Christa Ludwig, Anne Gjevang, Siegfried Jerusalem, Horst Hiestermann, and James Morris; conducted by James Levine. (April 30 at 8.) . . . **die walküre**, with Hildegard Behrens, Jessye Norman, Christa Ludwig, Gary Lakes, James Morris, and Matti Salminen; conducted by James Levine. (May 1 at 6.) . . . **il trovatore**, with Sharon Sweet, Dolora Zajick, Franco Bonisolli, and Lajos Miller; conducted by Michelangelo Veltri. (May 2 at 8 and May 5 at noon.) . . . **siegfried**, with Hildegard Behrens, Anne Gjevang, Dawn Upshaw, William Johns, Horst Hiestermann, and James Morris; conducted by James Levine. (May 3 at 6.) . . . **götterdämmerung**, with Hildegard Behrens, Hanna Lisowska, Christa Ludwig, Joyce Castle, Siegfried Jerusalem, Anthony Raffell, Matti Salminen, and Ekkehard Wlaschiha; conducted by James Levine. (May 5 at 6:30.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting performances of "La Bohème." Conducted by Anthony Amato. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. May 4-5 at 7:30 and May 6 at 2:30. Through May 13. For information about tickets, call 228-8200.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. Yuri Temirkanov, music director of the Leningrad Philharmonic, conducting. May 1 at 7:30: Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony. . . . ¶ May 3 at 8, May 4 at 2, May 5 at 8, and May 8 at 7:30: With John Lill, piano, in a program of works by Beethoven, Prokofiev, and Sergei Slonimsky.

Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra—Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts a Berg-Schoenberg-Richard Strauss program. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 9 at 8.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's—Gordon Wright conducts three different programs of "Music of Forgotten Romantics." Works by Ferruccio Busoni, David Popper, and Emanuel Moór, among others, will be performed. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 3, May 5, and May 10, all at 8.)

Manhattan Symphony—Glen Cortese conducts a program of twentieth-century music that includes the première of a work by Ludmila Ulelha. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. May 4 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Manhattan Philharmonic—JoAnn Falletta directing "Carmina Burana" and John Rutter directing his own Requiem. (Carnegie Hall. May 6 at 2.)

Riverside Choir—John Walker directs a performance of Haydn's oratorio "The Creation." (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. May 6 at 3. Admission by contribution.)

RECITALS

Heinrich Schiff—Cello, in a program that includes works by Bach and Brahms. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. May 2 at 8.)

Aleksei Sultanov—Piano. The winner of the 1989 Van Cliburn competition playing compositions by Mozart, Beethoven, Scriabin, Liszt, and Prokofiev. (Carnegie Hall. May 3 at 8.)

Russell Sherman—Piano. Performing a program of Beethoven sonatas. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 3 at 8.)

Composers Concordance—Presenting works by contemporary American composers. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. May 4 at 8. For information about tickets, call 564-4899.)

Double Edge—Edmund Niemann and Nurit Tilles, duo pianists, in a program that includes premières of works by John Cage and Meredith Monk. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. 353-4195. May 4 at 8.)

Alaria Chamber Ensemble—Performing a varied program that includes works by Telemann and Jack Beeson. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. May 4 at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Playing three Beethoven string quartets. (Alice Tully Hall. May 5 at 3.)

Pomerium Musices—A vocal group, performing sacred and secular works by Josquin Desprez, Morales, and other Renaissance composers. (Christ Church United Methodist, Park Ave. at 60th St. 838-3036. May 5 at 8.)

Glenn Dicterow—Violin. With Gerald Robbins, piano, and Nancy Allen, harp. (Juilliard The-

Aleksei Sultanov at Carnegie Hall

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May the sun shine warm upon your face,
May the wind be always at your back,

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atre, 155 W. 65th St. May 6 at 3. For information about free tickets, call 874-7515.)

Music Before 1800—Presenting the Handel and Haydn Society Chamber Ensemble in a program that features Bach concertos. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. May 6 at 4. Tickets at the door on the day of the performance.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Performing works by Mozart, Messiaen, and Cage. With guest artists, conducted by Gunther Schuller. (Alice Tully Hall. May 6 at 5 and May 8 at 7:30.)

Peter Schickele—With the Canticum Novum Singers, Estelle Parsons, and other guests in a retrospective of Mr. Schickele's works, both comic and serious. (Alice Tully Hall. May 7 at 8.)

"Vivaldi's Venice"—Opening concert of a five-year festival of works by Vivaldi and his musical heirs and forebears. With Ruggiero Ricci, violin; Eugenie Grunewald, mezzo-soprano; Kenneth Cooper, harpsichord; a chorus and the Little Orchestra Society, led by Dino Anagnost; and Claire Bloom reading sonnets by Vivaldi. (Alice Tully Hall. May 9 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

"Bang on a Can Festival"—The fourth annual fête opens on May 4 and will take place over the next two weekends. "It's not a highfalutin name," says Julia Wolfe, one of the artistic directors (together with fellow-composers Michael Gordon and David Lang), of this already essential new-music festival. The three part-time impresarios prefer the downtown-primitive ring of "Bang on a Can," even though the festival presents a sophisticated and diverse program of works ranging "from the serial to the surreal," as Ms. Wolfe puts it. On the final weekend, the Kronos Quartet will accompany Terry Riley's new ensemble, Khayal; and the marathon concert that winds up the festival will include works by Steve Reich, Meredith Monk, and John Cage. May 4-6 at 8: Newband, directed by Dean Drummond, presents music by Harry Partch. (Rapp Arts Center, 220 E. 4th St. 439-1103.)

Sinéad O'Connor—It seems everywhere you turn people are humming Sinéad O'Connor's Prince-penned smash, "Nothing Compares 2 U." O'Connor's big, gorgeous album "I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got" is No. 1 this week, and it's the first great record of the year (the one against which all others will be judged). This twenty-three-year-old artist has crafted some mysterious, shimmering laments here, and anyone who happened to catch her on MTV's "Unplugged" heard how compelling, and intimate, her singing can be. O'Connor's command of the stage is astonishing—her performances are alternately tender and brutal. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. May 9-10 at 8.)

"Highlights in Jazz"—A salute to Jimmy Heath, with Red Rodney, Slide Hampton, and others. (Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Sq. and LaGuardia Pl. 998-4949. May 3 at 8.)

Cowboy Junkies—Beacon Theatre. May 3 at 8.

Red Rodney—New School, 66 W. 12th St. May 4 at 6. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Bulgarian State Female Vocal Choir—Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. May 4 at 8.

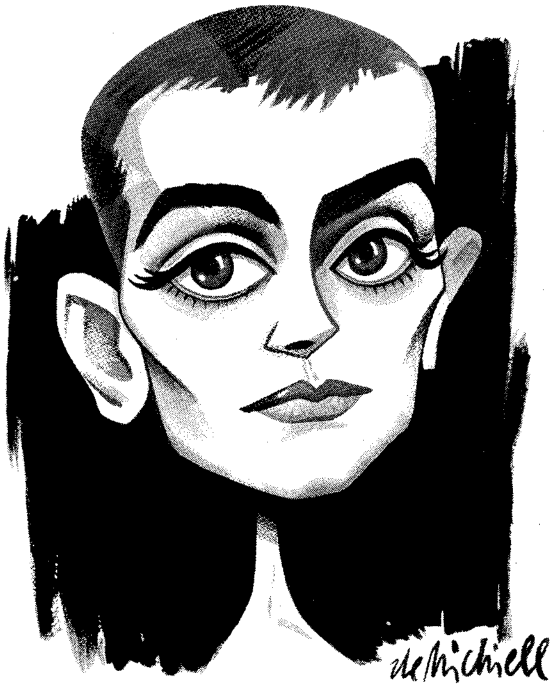
Lenny Pickett—With the Borneo Horns. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. May 5 at 8.)

Mark Russell—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 7 at 8.

Barbara Cook—With the Oratorio Society of New York. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 9 at 8.)

Jordan Sandke—With a sextet. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. May 9 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Roulette—May 3: Tiyé Giraud. . . . ¶ May 4: Dora Ohrenstein. . . . ¶ May 5: Susan Stenger and David Means. . . . ¶ May 6: Myra Melford. (228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Evenings at 9.)



Sinéad O'Connor at the Beacon

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Cincinnati Reds, May 2-3 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Houston Astros, May 4 at 7:35, May 5-6 at 1:35, and May 7 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the San Francisco Giants, May 8-9 at 7:35.

Yankees—Vs. the Oakland A's, April 30-May 2 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Cleveland Indians, May 3 at 1.

(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . ¶ At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

CHAMPIONSHIP—BASKETBALL

Knicks—Vs. the Celtics, in the first round of the Eastern Conference playoffs. The third game will be May 2, and the fourth, if necessary, will be May 4.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Visitors—Twenty-six women from the Soviet Union are here to see the sights and meet the Mayor before they go down to Washington for a summit on women's issues. On May 2, starting at 7:30, they'll be at the Hunter College Playhouse (Park Ave. at 68th St.) to give several short talks and to answer questions. The forum is free and open to the public.

At the Brooklyn Botanic Garden—May 5-6, from 10 to 5: *Sakura Matsuri*, a Japanese celebration of flowering cherry trees. Catch the taiko drummers, take a flower-arranging lesson, or attend a tea ceremony. . . . ¶ May 9, from 9 to 7, and May 10, from 9 to 3: Pre-Mother's Day plant sale. Get those scented geraniums while they last. (1000 Washington Ave. 1-718 622-4433.)

Calvin Trillin and William Bolcom—The two will discuss Bolcom's work after a short performance of his Piano Quartet. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 8 at 8.)

Readings—May 3 at 8: E. L. Doctorow, Garrison Keillor, Galway Kinnell, and others read tributes to the poet James Wright. (West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. 787-6557.) . . . ¶ May 8 at 6: Philip Appleman and Mary Jo Salter read from their own poetry. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 9 at 8: Sue Miller will read from her new novel, "Family Pictures." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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6	7	8	9			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 30.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Bail Jumper" (directed by Christian Faber).
Theatre 2: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 3: "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer" (†).
Theatre 4: Through May 1: "The Handmaid's Tale" (Volker Schlöndorff), with Natasha Richardson, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall, and Aidan Quinn. From May 2: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 5: "Mystery Train" (Jim Jarmusch).
Theatre 6: The 22nd International Tournée of Animation.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through May 3: "Mr. Hoover and I" (Emile de Antonio), a documentary.
From May 4: (Separate admissions) "Silence=Death" (Rosa von Praunheim), a documentary; "Positive" (von Praunheim), a documentary; and "Lord of the Flies" (1963, Peter Brook).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton, and Armand Assante.
Theatre 2: "I Love You to Death" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline, Tracey Ullman, and River Phoenix.
Theatre 3: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke and Carré Otis.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "I Love You to Death" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline, Tracey Ullman, and River Phoenix.
Theatre 2: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte and Timothy Hutton.
Theatre 3: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (Steve Barron).
Theatre 4: "Miami Blues" (†).
Theatre 5: "The First Power" (Robert Resnikoff), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Tracy Griffith.
Theatre 6: Through May 3: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin. From May 4: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Pretty Woman" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through May 3: "The Gods Must Be Crazy II" (Jamie Uys).
From May 4: "Short Time" (Gregg Champion), with Dabney Coleman, Matt Frewer, and Teri Garr.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Miami Blues" (†).
Theatre 2: "The First Power" (Robert Resnikoff), with Lou Diamond Phillips.
Theatre 3: Through May 3: "Crazy People" (†). From May 4: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
Through May 3: "Vital Signs" (Marisa Silver), with Adrian Pasdar, Diane Lane, and Jimmy Smits.
From May 4: "Short Time" (Gregg Champion), with Dabney Coleman, Matt Frewer, and Teri Garr.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Miami Blues" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Crazy People" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through May 1: "Nuns on the Run" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eric Idle and Robbie Coltrane. From May 2: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 2: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke and Carré Otis.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Pretty Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 3: "Torn Apart" (Jack Fisher), with Adrian Pasdar and Cecilia Peck. From May 4: "Without You I'm Nothing" (John Boskovich), with Sandra Bernhard.
Theatre 3: "Spaced Invaders" (Patrick Read Johnson), with Douglas Barr.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "I Love You to Death" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline, Tracey Ullman, and River Phoenix.
Theatre 2: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton, and Armand Assante.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Gods Must Be Crazy II" (Jamie Uys).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through May 3: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin. From May 4: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).
Theatre 2: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (Steve Barron).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Monsieur Hire" (Patrice Leconte; in French), with Michel Blanc and Sandrine Bonnaire.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"In the Spirit" (Sandra Seacat), with Jeannie Berlin, Olympia Dukakis, Marlo Thomas, Elaine May, and Peter Falk.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Crazy People" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through May 3: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones, Joss Ackland, and Richard Jordan. From May 4: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).
Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Impulse" (Sondra Locke), with Theresa Russell and Jeff Fahey.
Theatre 2: "Pretty Woman" (†).

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: Through May 3: "Sweetie" (directed by Jane Campion). From May 4: "Too Beautiful for You" (Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu.
Theatre 2: Through May 3: (Separate admissions) "Macho Dancer" (Lino Brocka); and "Labyrinth of Passion" (1982, Pedro Almodóvar, in Spanish). From May 4: "The Belly of an Architect" (Peter Greenaway).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: Through May 3: "Crazy People" (†). From May 4: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).
Theatre 2: "Cry-Baby" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Pretty Woman" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (Steve Barron).
Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell and Jenny Seagrove.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "My Left Foot" (†).
Theatre 2: "Camille Claudel" (†).
Theatre 3: "Henry V" (†).
Theatre 4: Through May 3: "Spaced Invaders" (Patrick Read Johnson), with Douglas Barr. From May 4: "The Feud" (Bill D'Elia), with René Auberjonois.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).
Theatre 2: "Nuns on the Run" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eric Idle and Robbie Coltrane.
Theatre 3: Through May 3: "Cry-Baby" (†). From May 4: "Short Time" (Gregg Champion), with Dabney Coleman, Matt Frewer, and Teri Garr.
Theatre 4: "Bad Influence" (Curtis Hanson), with Rob Lowe and James Spader.
Theatre 5: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Gods Must Be Crazy II" (Jamie Uys).
Theatre 7: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis.
Theatre 8: Through May 1: "The Handmaid's Tale" (Volker Schlöndorff), with Natasha Richardson, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall, and Aidan Quinn. From May 2: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 9: "My Left Foot" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Spaced Invaders" (Patrick Read Johnson), with Douglas Barr.
Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.
Theatre 3: "Impulse" (Sondra Locke), with Theresa Russell and Jeff Fahey.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Crazy People" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: Through May 3: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†). From May 4: "My Left Foot" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 1: "Bad Influence" (Curtis Hanson), with Rob Lowe, James Spader, and Lisa Zane. From May 2: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 3: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 4: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis.
Theatre 5: Through May 3: "Nuns on the Run" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eric Idle and Robbie Coltrane. From May 4: "Short Time" (Gregg Champion), with Dabney Coleman, Matt Frewer, and Teri Garr.
Theatre 6: "Cry-Baby" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Chattahoochee" (Mick Jackson), with Gary Oldman and Dennis Hopper.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through May 3: "Henry V" (†).
From May 4 (tentative): "My Left Foot" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Mahabharata" (Peter Brook).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"The Gods Must Be Crazy II" (Jamie Uys).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Camille Claudel" (†).

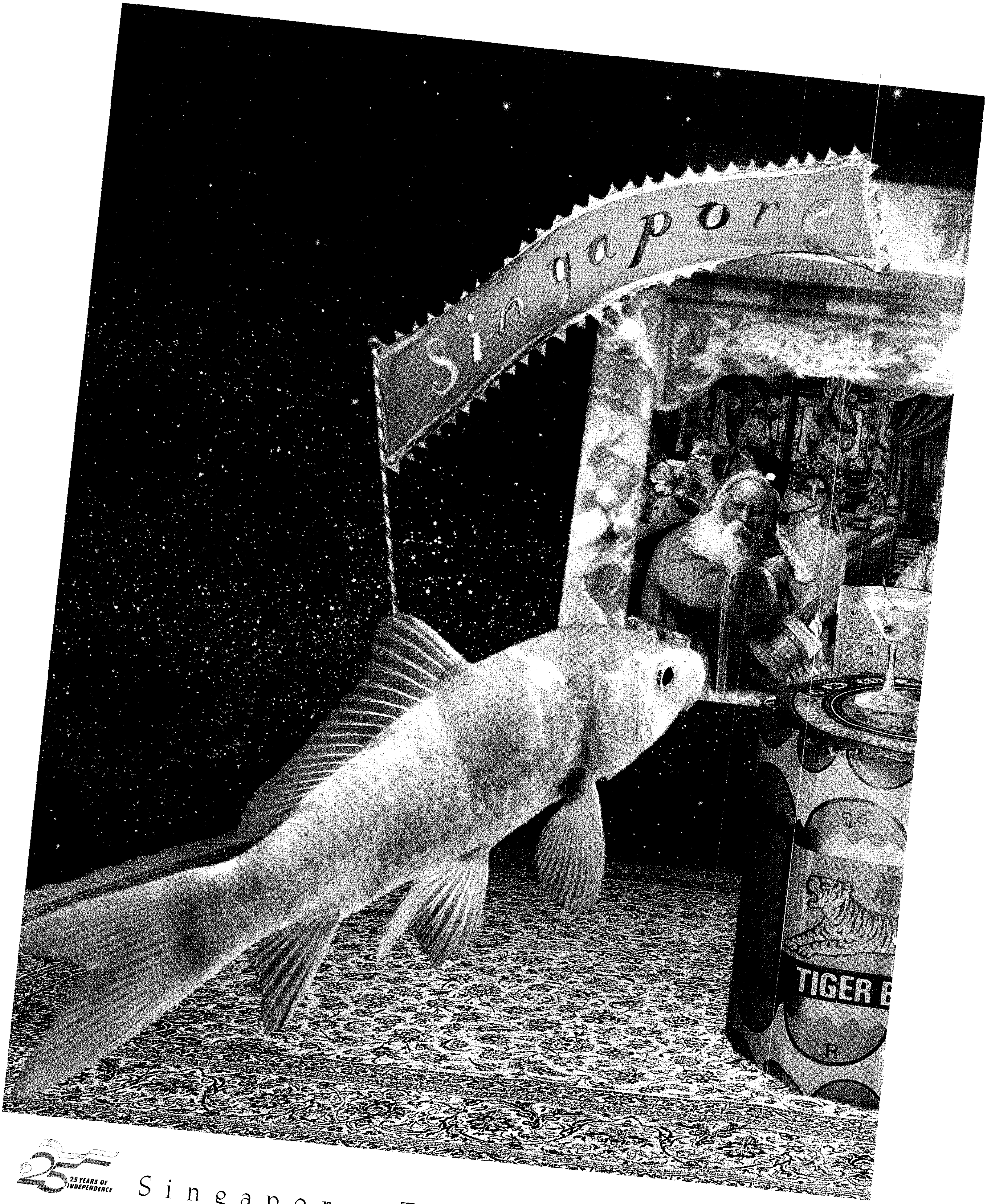
Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Mama, There's a Man in Your Bed" (Coline Serreau; in French), with Daniel Auteuil and Firmine Richard.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Miami Blues" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: Through May 3: "My Left Foot" (†). From May 4: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).
Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe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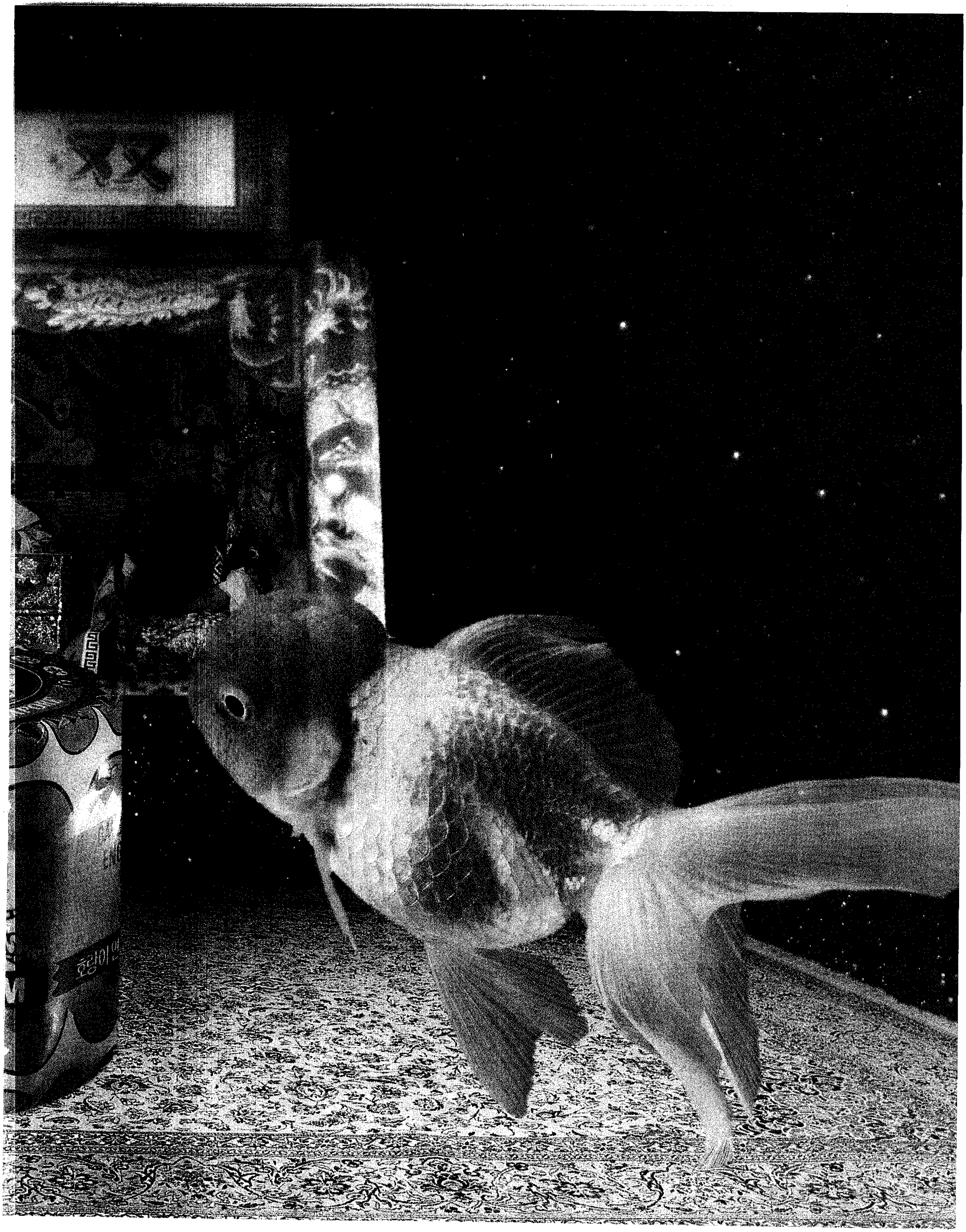

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.

Theatre 3: Through May 3: "Too Beautiful for You" (Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Josiane Balasko, and Carole Bouquet. From May 4: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

Through May 1: "Nuns on the Run" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eric Idle and Robbie Coltrane.

From May 2: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (Steve Barron).

Theatre 2: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones, Joss Ackland, and Richard Jordan.

Theatre 3: "Pretty Woman" (†).

Theatre 4: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton, and Armand Assante.

Theatre 5: Through May 3: "Crazy People" (†). From May 4: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).

Theatre 6: "The First Power" (Robert Resnikoff), with Lou Diamond Phillips.

Yves Montand in "The Wages of Fear"

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: Through May 3: "I Love You to Death" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline, Tracey Ullman, and River Phoenix. From May 4: "Short Time" (Gregg Champion), with Dabney Coleman, Matt Frewer, and Teri Garr.

Theatre 2: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Spaced Invaders" (Patrick Read Johnson), with Douglas Barr.

Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell and Dwier Brown.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "House Party" (directed by Reginald Hudlin), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.

Theatre 2: Through May 3: "Twisted Justice." From May 4: "Brain Dead."

Theatre 3: "Angel Town" (Eric Karson), with Olivier Gruner and Theresa Saldana.

Theatre 4: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton, and Armand Assante.

Theatre 5: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (Steve Barron).

Theatre 6: "Game."

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Pretty Woman" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: Through May 3: "The First Power" (Robert Resnikoff), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Tracy Griffith. From May 4: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin.

Theatre 3: Through May 3: "Crazy People" (†). From May 4: "The First Power."

Theatre 4: "Spaced Invaders" (Patrick Read Johnson), with Douglas Barr.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

Through May 3: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin.

From May 4: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: Through May 3: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis. From May 4: "Short Time" (Gregg Champion), with Dabney Coleman, Matt Frewer, and Teri Garr.

Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

Through May 3: "Blue Steel" (Kathryn Bigelow), with Jamie Lee Curtis and Ron Silver.

From May 4: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis.

West Side Cinema I and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.

Theatre 2: "Impulse" (Sondra Locke), with Theresa Russell and Jeff Fahey.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

April 30: "Evil Under the Sun" (1982, directed by Guy Hamilton), with Peter Ustinov as Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot; and "The Mirror Crack'd" (1980, Hamilton), with Angela Lansbury as Christie's Jane Marple.

From May 1: The seventh annual Israeli film festival.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through May 1: "Double Indemnity" (1944, Billy Wilder), with Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, and Edward G. Robinson; and "The Bitter Tea of General Yen" (1933, Frank Capra), with Stanwyck and Nils Asther.

May 2-3: "Café Flesh" (1980, Rinse Dream); and "Le Dernier Combat" (1984, Luc Besson; a French film, without dialogue).

May 4-5: "Amarcord" (1974, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Bruno Zanin; and "Nights of Cabiria" (†).

May 6: "The Arabian Nights" (1973, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian); and "The Canterbury Tales" (1972, Pasolini; in Italian), with Hugh Griffith and Jenny Runacre.

May 7-8: "River's Edge" (†); and "In Cold Blood" (1967, Richard Brooks), with Robert Blake and Scott Wilson.

From May 9: "Blaze" (†); and "All the King's Men" (1949, Robert Rossen), with Broderick Crawford, Joanne Dru, Mercedes McCambridge, John Ireland, and John Derek.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Through May 1: "Impact" (1949, Arthur Lubin), with Brian Donlevy and Ella Raines; "The Hidden Room" (1950, Edward Dmytryk), with Robert Newton and Sally Grey; and "The Scar" (1948, Steve Sekely), with Joan Bennett and Paul Henreid.

May 2-3: "The Lenny Bruce Performance Film" (1974), an actual Bruce performance, recorded in August, 1965, at Basin Street West, in San Francisco; and "Dance Hall Racket" (1956), with Bruce.

May 4-5: "Diabolique" (1955, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Simone Signoret, Vera Clouzot, and Paul Meurisse; and "The Wages of Fear" (†).

May 6: "Swann in Love" (†); and "The Tin Drum" (1980, Volker Schlöndorff; in German), with David Bennent.

May 7-8: "The Affair Blum" (1948, Erich Engel; in German); and "Der Untertan" (1951, Wolfgang Staudte; in German).

From May 9: "Open City" (†) and "The Diary of a Country Priest" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

April 30: "Alphaville" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina, and Akim Tamiroff; and "Le Gai Savoir" (1968, Godard; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud.

May 1: "The Nanny" (1965, Seth Holt), with Bette Davis, Jill Bennett, and Wendy Craig; and "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" (1962, Robert Aldrich), with Davis, Joan Crawford, and Victor Buono.

May 2: "Mildred Pierce" (1945, Michael Curtiz), with Joan Crawford, Jack Carson, Zachary Scott, Ann Blyth, Eve Arden, and Bruce Bennett; and "Daisy Kenyon" (1947, Otto Preminger), with Crawford, Dana Andrews, Henry Fonda, Ruth Warrick, and Peggy Ann Garner.

May 3: "Princess Tam Tam" (1935, Edmond T. Gréville; in French), with Josephine Baker and Albert Préjean; and "Zou Zou" (1934, Marc Allégret; in French), with Baker and Jean Gabin.

May 4-5: "Masculine Feminine" (†); and "A Married Woman" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Macha Meril.

May 6: "East of Eden" (†); and "Rebel Without a Cause" (1955, Nicholas Ray), with James Dean, Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Corey Allen, and Nick Adams.

May 7: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (†); and "Muriel" (1963, Alain Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig.

May 8: "In a Lonely Place" (†) and "Dead Reckoning" (†).

May 9: "The Hustler" (1961, Robert Rossen), with Paul Newman, Jackie Gleason, Piper Laurie, Myron McCormick, and George C. Scott; and "Cool Hand Luke" (1967, Stuart Rosenberg), with Paul Newman.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

Theatre 1: May 1 at noon: "In Search of Locations for 'The Gospel According to St. Matthew' " (1964, directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian). . . . ¶ May 1 at 2:30: "Il Bell' Antonio" (1960, Mauro Bolognini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni and Claudia Cardinale. . . . ¶ May 1 at 6: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1964, Pasolini; in Italian). . . . ¶ May 3 at 2:30: "Salò, 120 Days of Sodom" (1975, Pasolini; in Italian). . . . ¶ May 5 at 2: "Hawks and Sparrows" (1966, Pasolini; in Italian). . . . ¶ May 5 at 6: "The Grim Reaper" (1962, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian). Mr. Bertolucci will be present. . . . ¶ May 6 at 2: "Mamma Roma" (1962, Pasolini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani, Ettore Garofolo, and Franco Citti. . . . ¶ May 6 at 6: "Salò, 120 Days of Sodom." . . . ¶ May 7 at 2:30: "Latent Image" (1987, Pablo Perelman; in Spanish). . . . ¶ May 7 at 6: "Children of the Cold War" (1985, Gonzalo Justiniano; in Spanish). Mr. Justiniano will be present. . . . ¶ May 8 at 2:30: "Mamma Roma." . . . ¶ May 8 at 6: "Il Bell' Antonio."

Theatre 2: April 30 at 6:30: A program of 16-mm. films by Scott Stark. . . . ¶ May 1 at 3: "Eyes of Laura Mars" (1978, Irvin Kershner), with Faye Dunaway, Tommy Lee Jones, and Brad Dourif. . . . ¶ May 1 at 6: "Model" (1980, Frederick Wiseman). . . . ¶ May 3 at 3 and 6: "Peacock's War" (1989, Robert McBride and Tom Marcyes), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 4 at 3: "Yesterday's Dream" (1989, Rodrigo Ortuzar) and "Angels" (1988, Tatiana Gaviola; in Spanish). Tatiana Gaviola will be present. . . . ¶ May 4 at 6: "Children of the Cold War" (1985, Gonzalo Justiniano; in Spanish). Mr. Justiniano will be present. . . . ¶ May 5 at 2:30: "Yesterday's Dream" and "Angels." Tatiana Gaviola will be present. . . . ¶ May 5 at 5: "Latent Image" (1987, Pablo Perelman; in Spanish). . . . ¶ May 6 at 2:30: "October Country" (1990, Daniel de la Vega; in Spanish). . . . ¶ May 6 at 5: "Lizards' Tales" (1987, Juan Carlos Bustamante; in Spanish). . . . ¶ May 7 at 6:30: A program of films by Michael Wallin, who will be present. . . . ¶ May 8 at 3: "Rear Window" (1954, Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart, Grace Kelly, and Wendell Corey. . . . ¶ May 8 at 6: "Peeping Tom" (1960, Michael Powell), with

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Underground classic

The year was 1969.

People were tiring of Pop Art, Op Art, psychedelia and the Summer of Love.

The fashion underground was talking about a new fragrance which had just surfaced quietly in Paris. And the knowledgeable few were snapping it up.

It was fresh but not flowery. Utterly clean yet oddly seductive. It had what the French call "presence."

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It flourishes in spite of minimal fanfare and an advertising budget that wouldn't keep Colette in stickpins.

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And classics don't need million-dollar hype. Just women of impeccable taste.

PARIS

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"Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" director Pedro Almodóvar

Carl Boehm, Moira Shearer, and Anna Massey.

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"Laurence Olivier: The Television Legacy." May 1-5: "Come Back, Little Sheba" (1977, Silvio Narizzano), with Olivier, Joanne Woodward, Carrie Fisher, and Nicholas Campbell. . . . May 8-9: "Voyage Round My Father" (1982, Alvin Rakoff), with Olivier, Alan Bates, Elizabeth Sellars, and Jane Asher. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1. . . . ¶ "The Reiner Moritz Collection." May 1-5: "A Time There Was. . . ." (1980, Tony Palmer), a profile of Benjamin Britten. . . . From May 8: "Stravinsky" (1982, Tony Palmer), a documentary. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 2.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In the Riklis Theatre, films on which William Cameron Menzies was either the production designer or the director. May 2 at 2:30: "The Maze" (1953, Menzies), with Richard Carlson and Veronica Hurst. . . . May 3 at 2:30: "Reign of Terror" (1949, Anthony Mann), with Richard Basehart. . . . May 4 at 2:30: "Gone with the Wind" (1939, Victor Fleming), with Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh. . . . ¶ May 5 at 5 and May 9 at 2: "Fuses" (1967), "Plumb Line" (1971), and "Viet-Flakes" (1965), all by Carolee Schneemann. . . . ¶ May 6 at 2: "Kitch's Last Meal" (1973-78, Schneemann).

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Jonas Mekas Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. May 3 at 7: "Greasepaint and Gasoline" (1931, Jindřich Honzl; in Czech). . . . ¶ May 3-4 at 9, May 5 at 10:30, and May 6 at 9: "Twister" (1988, Michael Almereyda), with Harry Dean Stanton, Lois Chiles, Suzy Amis, Dylan McDermott, and Crispin Glover. . . . ¶ May 4 at 7: "Your Money or Your Life" (1932, Honzl; in Czech). . . . ¶ May 6 at 5:30: "Heave Ho!" (1934, Martin Frič; in Czech). . . . ¶ May 6 at 7: "The World Belongs to Us" (1937, Frič; in Czech).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 2 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Toni" (1934, Jean Renoir; in French), with Charles Blavette, Célia Montalvan, Jenny Hélia, and Max Dalban. . . . ¶ May 9 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle" (1987, Eric Rohmer; in French), with Jessica Forde, Joëlle Miquel, Marie Rivière, and Fabrice Luchini.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—May 4 at 6:30: "What Did the Lady Forget?" (1937, Yasujiro Ozu; in Japanese).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—April 30 at 1: "Come Back, Africa" (1959, Lionel Rogosin); "Fields of Endless Day" (1978, Terence McCarthey-Filgate); and "Sugar Cane Alley" (1983, Euzhan Palcy). . . . ¶ April 30 at 6: "Sparkle" (1976, Sam O'Steen), with Irene Cora, Lonette McKee, Philip Michael Thomas, Mary Alice, and Dorian Hareword; and "Soul to Soul" (1971, Denis Sanders).

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 81st. (879-5500)—May 5 at 4 and 6:30: "Days of Heaven" (1978, Terrence Malick), with Richard Gere, Brooke Adams, Sam Shepard, Linda Manz, and Robert Wilke.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3633)—May 3-4 at noon: "Art Make-Up, Nos. 1-4: White, Pink, Green, Black" (1968, Bruce Nauman; silent); and "Production Stills" (1970, Morgan Fisher). . . . ¶ May 3-4 at 3: "Lip Synch" (1969, Nauman). . . . ¶ May 5 at noon and May 6 at 1: "Wavelength" (1967, Michael Snow); and "Frame" (1969, Richard Serra). . . . ¶ May 5 at 3 and May 6 at 4: "Revolving Upside Down" (1969, Nauman). . . . ¶ May 8 at 1:30 and May 9 at noon: "The Flicker" (1966, Tony Conrad); and "T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G" (1968, Paul Sharits). . . . ¶ May 8 at 3:30 and May 9 at 3: "Black Light, White Light" (1972, Keith Sonnier); and "Noisefields" (1974, Steina Vasulka and Woody Vasulka).

Loeb Student Center, New York University, Washington Sq. and LaGuardia Pl. (998-4949)—May 7-11 from 1 to 5 and 6 to 11: A hundred and fifty films by undergraduate and graduate students in the Tisch School of the Arts.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Blaze—The love story of that old raspy-voiced rooster Earl K. Long, three-time governor of Louisiana, and the young red-headed stripper Blaze Starr is bawdy and satirical—it's Rabelaisian. Life was a banquet for Earl, and when he met Blaze he'd found the centerpiece. Ron Shelton, who wrote and directed, cherishes Blaze (Lolita Davidovich, in her first major screen role), and he adores Ol' Earl (Paul Newman), who used his swamp smarts to fight the white supremacists. But Shelton doesn't quite engage with the material; the picture is lame and rhythmless. Still, it's never boring, and it offers a ribald view of Southern politics that contrasts with the stern, melodramatic portrait of Earl's older brother Huey as a fascistic demagogue in the 1949 film "All the King's Men." Newman, using the low, hoarse voice of a lifelong stump speaker, seems an eccentric husk of a man. He begins too far into the character; we have to catch up. By the end, we're with him. With Robert Wuhl, Jerry Hardin, Gailard Sartain, Jeffrey DeMunn, Garland Bunting, and, in one scene, the real Blaze Starr.—P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/11/89.) (Cinema Village; starting May 9.)

Camille Claudel—She lived, she loved, she sculpted, she went nuts. Bruno Nuytten's first film is a de-luxe biography of a nearly forgotten (but attractive!) artist who studied with the great Rodin, became his assistant and lover, and then struggled to break free of his influence and discover her own identity as a sculptor. Willful (and comely) as she is, Camille never manages to shake her obsession with Rodin, and she makes a mess of her life and her career. This is rich material, but the movie is a real chore to sit through: it's two and a half hours long, and the pace is sluggish. Nuytten, a superb cinematographer, doesn't seem to know how to tell a story—not one as complex as this, anyway. Isabelle Adjani plays Camille (there are obvious similarities to her role in "The Story of Adèle H.") with terrific abandon and intensity, yet the performance isn't satisfying; the film is so poorly shaped as drama that even her most striking moments seem to come out of nowhere. Also with Gérard Depardieu as Rodin, Laurent Grevill as Paul Claudel (Camille's younger brother, who became a well-known writer), and Alain Cuny. The script, by Nuytten and Marilyn Goldin, is based on a biography by Reine-Marie Paris. In French.—T.R. (Quad Cinema, and Carnegie Screening Room.)

The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover—With Richard Bohringer, Michael Gambon, Helen Mirren, and Alan Howard; directed by Peter Greenaway. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Angelika Film Center, Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

Crazy People—Dudley Moore plays a stressed-out advertising copywriter who is committed to a sanitarium. And there, with the help of his fellow mental patients, he does his best "creative" work: campaigns that—in the movie's view—tell the truth about the products they advertise. The ads are hugely successful, and the ad-agency bigwigs, predictably, try to exploit the innocent eccentrics who've dreamed them up: it's corporate baddies against lovable zanies. The copywriter, meanwhile, is recovering his sanity and falling for the cutest of the loonies, played by Daryl Hannah. This desperate, interminable comedy is sort of a nightmare combination of "King of Hearts" and "Putney Swope"—with glossy Hollywood-style uplift thrown in. Honesty has nothing to do with the moviemakers' approach: they give the usual shoddy goods an old-fashioned hard sell. Also with J. T. Walsh, Paul Reiser, Mercedes Ruehl, David Paymer, Bill Smitrovish, and Paul Bates. Screenplay by Mitch Markowitz. Directed, ineptly, by Tony Bill.—T.R. (59th Street East Cinema, U. A. East, and Guild. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace, Waverly, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy; through May 3.)

Cry-Baby—John Waters' new movie, set in Baltimore in 1954, is an attempt to repeat the formula of his "Hairspray" (1988), but this is a much less enjoyable picture. Like all Waters movies, it's about a battle between the good, disreputable people and the bad, conventional ones—in this case, a group of juvenile delinquents (called "drapes"), whose leader is a handsome rock and roller known as Cry-Baby (Johnny Depp), versus "the squares," represented by just about everybody else in town. Cry-Baby, a sensitive sort (he lost both his parents to the electric chair), falls in love with a square girl, Allison (Amy Locane), and the film devotes itself to exploring the question, Can their forbidden love survive in a world that just doesn't understand? (Can't the adults see that these mixed-up kids are the cutest people alive?) Unfortunately, almost everything in the movie feels flat and enervated. It's indifferently, mechanically paced; the musical numbers are ineptly staged; and Depp isn't a very exciting presence. Waters seems to be going through the motions: "Cry-Baby" is all attitude, a rote recitation of mildly naughty jokes he's made before. Maybe cute people don't inspire him. The bizarre supporting cast includes Polly Bergen, former porn queen Traci Lords, Kim McGuire (as a spectacularly ugly girl called Hatchet-Face), Susan Tyrrell, Ricki Lake, Iggy Pop, Troy Donahue, Joey Heatherton, Joe Dallesandro, David Nelson, and celebrity ex-con Patty Hearst. The star of Waters' previous films, the massive transvestite Divine, died just after the release of "Hairspray," and in his absence the bad-taste touches are sourer than usual; in this picture we feel there's something a little masochistic about Waters' fascination with the grotesque.—T.R. (4/9/90) (Waverly, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through May 3.)

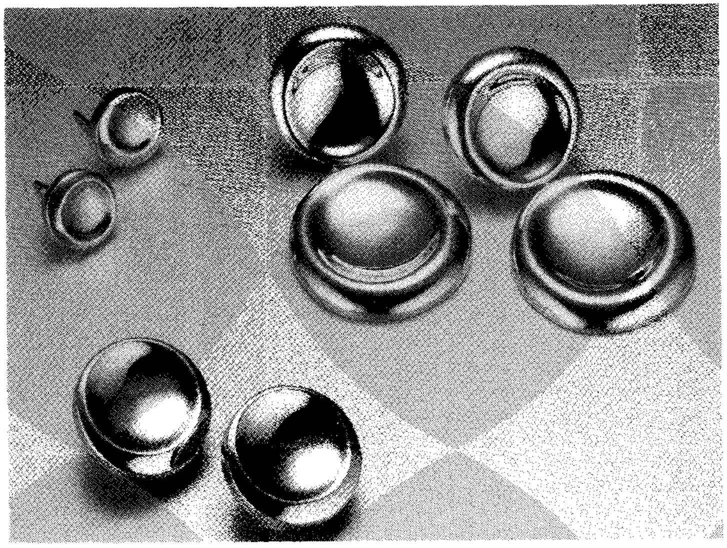
Dead Reckoning (1947)—A forgettable Bogart melodrama that was already familiar when it came out; it had been synthesized from several of his hits, with Lizabeth Scott's role processed out of Mary Astor and Lauren Bacall routines. Scott double-crosses a friend of Bogart's, and as he takes her to the authorities he snarls, "You're going to fry." "Ah," she says yearningly, flaring her nostrils, "can't we put this behind us? Don't you love me?" He sneers heavily, though you can see that deep down under he loves her. She fries. John Cromwell directed; with Morris Carnovsky, Wallace Ford, and William Prince.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 8.)

The Diary of a Country Priest (1950)—Robert Bresson's masterly adaptation of the Georges Bernanos novel about the suffering of a young priest (Claude Laydu) whose faith is neither understood nor accepted by his parishioners. A film of great purity and, at the end, a Bach-like intensity. The dialogue and the passages read from the diary are taken directly from the novel, though while you're watching you feel as if you were seeing a silent movie. (It's the effect of the expressive images and the general austerity.) This is one of the few modern works in any art form that help one to understand the religious life—which for this useless young man is a terrible one, yet with moments of holiness. If there is a flaw in the film, it's the rhythm—you feel you're dying with the priest. The film may raise a question in your mind: Does Bresson know what a pain this young man is? The priest's austere spirituality may give the community the same sort of pain that Bresson's later movies give some of us in the audience. In French.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; starting May 9.)

Driving Miss Daisy—Alfred Uhry's adaptation of his much honored play is still full of manipulative bits—it's virtually all manipulative bits—but the director, Bruce Beresford, understands how to work them while cutting down on their obviousness. Set in Atlanta, starting in 1948, the movie is the story of the companionship that develops between stubborn, suspicious Miss Daisy (Jessica Tandy), a wealthy Jewish widow of seventy-two, and her resilient chauffeur, Hoke (Morgan Freeman), a widower about a decade younger than she is. Essentially, it's about how he changes her. He's made upright, considerate, humane—he's made perfect—so that nothing will disturb our appreciation of the gentle, bittersweet reverie we're watching. But it's acted (and directed) eloquently. Tandy and Freeman achieve a beautiful equilibrium. And Dan Aykroyd comes through with a fine performance as Miss Daisy's good-old-boy son.—P.K. (12/25/89) (Eastside Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Cinema 3. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; through May 3.)

East of Eden (1955)—An amazingly high-strung, feverishly poetic movie about Cain and Abel as American brothers living on a lettuce farm in California in the years just before the First World War. Elia Kazan directed this adaptation of Steinbeck's novel, and it's like seeing a series of teasers: violent moments and charged scenes without much coherence. As the romantic, alienated young hero, James Dean is decorated with all sorts of charming gaucheries; he's sensitive, defenseless, hurting. Maybe his father (Raymond Massey) doesn't love him, but the camera does, and we're supposed to; we're thrust into upsetting angles, caught in infatuated closeups, and prodded—"Look at all that beautiful desperation." When this Cain strikes his brother (Richard Davalos), the soundtrack amplifies the blow as if worlds were colliding; a short, heavy dose of Expressionism may be followed by a pastoral romp or an elaborate bit of Americana; an actor may suddenly assume a psychotic stance and another actor shatter a train window with his head. It's far from a dull movie, but it's certainly a very strange one; it's an enshrinement of the mixed-up kid. Here and in "Rebel Without a Cause," Dean seems to go just about as far as anybody can in acting misunderstood. With Julie Harris, who gives a memorably lyric performance, and Burl Ives, Jo Van Fleet, Albert Dekker, Lois Smith, Barbara Baxley, Timothy Carey, Jonathan Haze, Mario Siletti, Harold Gordon, Lonny Chapman, and Nick Dennis. Script by Paul Osborn; cinematography by Ted McCord; music by Leonard Rosenman. —P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 6.)

Henry V—Adapted and directed by its young star, Kenneth Branagh, this fast-paced version isn't exultant, like the one made forty-five years earlier by Laurence Olivier. Branagh emphasizes the price paid for war: the bloodshed. And, in keeping with his generation's supposed disillusion with war, he minimizes the play's glorification of the English fighting man. His conception of how to film the play is to look closely at the conniving, the misgivings, the ego wars. (This epic noir doesn't indicate why the French lost at Agincourt.) Branagh is not an overnight great moviemaker; his attempts at spectacu-



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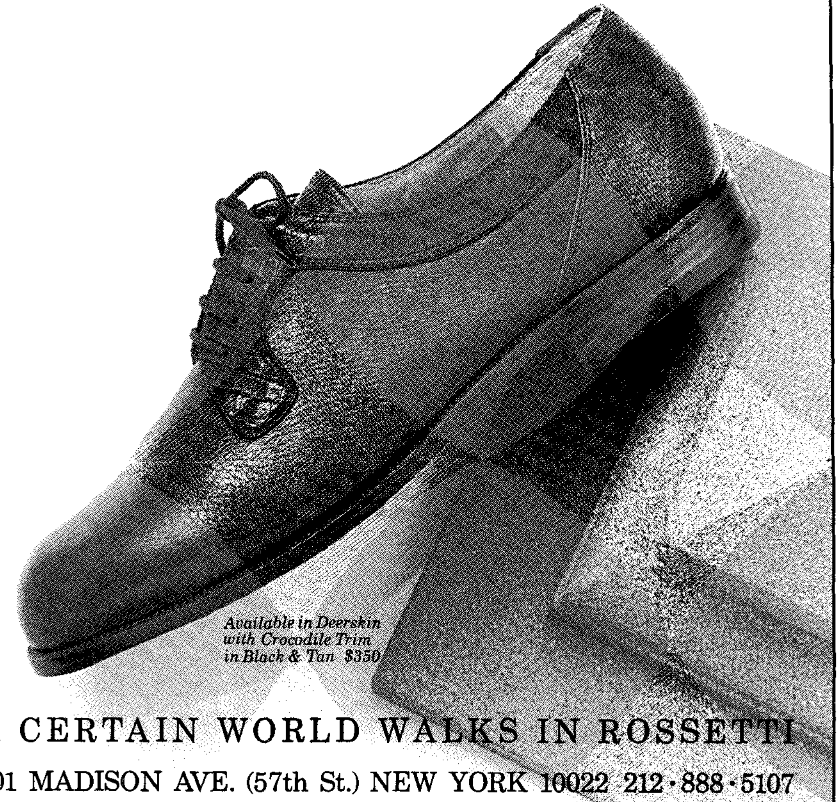

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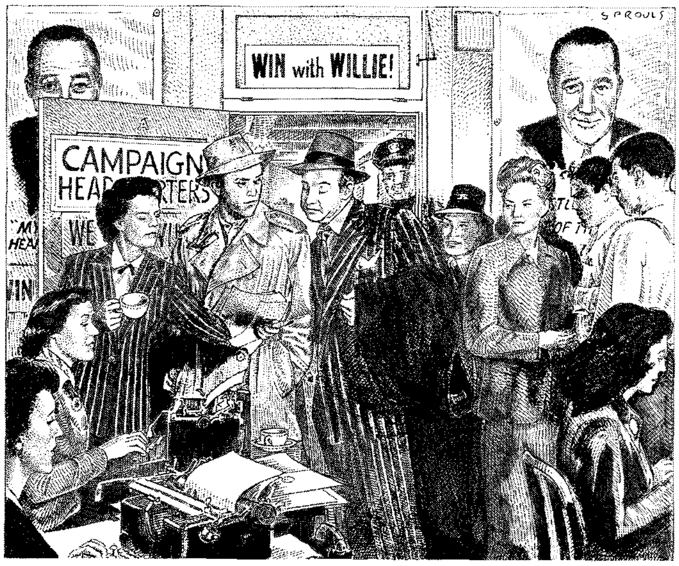
lar effects strain his inventiveness. But as an actor he has something of James Cagney's confident Irishness; he's intensely likable, with a beautiful, expressive voice and a straightforwardness that drives the whole film ahead. He and the other performers are so up that you feel their pride in working on true dramatic poetry. It's a company of stars: Paul Scofield as the melancholy French king whose face foretells the doom of his army, Christopher Ravenscroft as the herald Mountjoy, Derek Jacobi as the Chorus, Judi Dench as Mistress Quickly, Robbie Coltrane as Falstaff, Brian Blessed as Exeter, Richard Briers as Bardolph, Richard Easton as the Constable of France, Alec McCowen as Ely, Robert Stephens as Pistol, Emma Thompson as Katherine, Geraldine McEwan as Alice, Christian Bale as Falstaff's boy, and, best of all, perhaps, Ian Holm as the chattering Welshman Fluellen.—P.K. (11/27/89) (Quad Cinema. . . . ¶ Festival; through May 3.)

Robert Rossen's 1949 Academy Award winner, "All the King's Men" (playing May 9-10 at the Cinema Village), has a scrambling, brawling gusto—it's all over the place in a good way. Adapting Robert Penn Warren's great American novel about a down-home dictator who closely resembles Huey Long, Rossen doesn't capture the book's full range of textures and emotions. But he achieves a hard-shell social panorama unusual for Hollywood studio productions.

Rossen filmed on location in Stockton, California, not in Louisiana. Legend has it that once he started shooting he threw away his own script and mined Warren's book for atmosphere and tension. He had his editors cut the film in the staccato, impressionistic style of "The Roaring Twenties" (he co-wrote that movie's screenplay). The result is a generalized but seething environment of hunger, anger, greed, and chaos, part neorealism and part hard-driving newsreel. The photography of barren American landscapes and small cityscapes is eloquent (the cinematographer was Burnett Guffey, who later did "Bonnie and Clyde"). The staging is sometimes hokey and sometimes touched with rough-hewn poetry. The transitions are crude or heartbreaking or both, as when Rossen goes from the carnage caused by a broken public-school fire escape to the delicate voice of a preacher reading the Bible over the victims' graves.

That incident clinches Willie Stark's political destiny—he's already campaigned against corrupt county building practices. Broderick Crawford seizes on the role of Stark with bravura animalism. Even when the reporter Jack Burden (John Ireland) sees him as a latter-day Abe Lincoln, Crawford suggests the brute beneath the fighting, populist words. The movie's political attitudes verge on the simplistic; at times, they seem to support the top cats' view of Willie Stark the alley cat. But Rossen recognizes the allure of an egg-breaking, omelette-making politico like Stark, both for the huddled masses and for the children of ineffectual upper crusters. And Crawford is joltingly potent—he looks as if he could build roads with his bare hands.



Mercedes McCambridge, John Ireland, Broderick Crawford, and campaign workers in "All the King's Men"

Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer—This low-budget independent feature, originally made for the home-video market, has a stark, relentless quality that is sometimes mistaken for art. Like Leonard Kastle's "The Honeymoon Killers" (1970), it's a deliberately flat, affectless treatment of gruesome true-crime material. (It's loosely based on the criminal career of a mass murderer named Henry Lee Lucas.) The movie's Henry (Michael Rooker) is a beefy, moronic-looking lug who lives in a miserable apartment with a creep named Otis (played, by Tom Towles, in a style that suggests a syphilitic Warren Oates) and Otis's sister, Becky (Tracy Arnold). Every now and then, Henry gets a sort of funny look in his eyes and goes out to kill somebody. Eventually, he starts taking Otis along, and Otis has a whale of a time; for a while, they videotape their exploits and watch them at home afterward. "Henry" plays like a hybrid of "Blood Feast" and "Stranger Than Paradise"; it mixes gore-movie carnage with Jarmusch-style aimless minimalism. Sure, it's compelling; the nature of the material guarantees that. But it doesn't seem to be telling us much more than that the world is a scary place and murder is ugly. We know those things. This is tabloid chic. The screenplay is by John McNaughton and Richard Fire; McNaughton directed.—T.R. (4/23/90) (Angelika Film Center.)

Hiroshima, Mon Amour (1959)—Hushed and hypnotic, it makes you so conscious of its artistry that you may feel as if you're in church and need to giggle. This first full-length film by Alain Resnais has a script by Marguerite Duras that features musical, incantatory dialogue and a crucial line, "They make movies to sell soap, why not a movie to sell peace?" The movie, which opens with the intertwined nude bodies of a French movie actress (Emmanuèle Riva) and a Japanese architect (Eiji Okada), was taken as powerful propaganda against the atom bomb. As the film goes on, the woman tells the man about her first experience of love: it was with a German soldier, who was killed on the last day of fighting. Her lyric, masochistic account lingers in the air. With its doomed romance in the past and its tortured affair in the present, this is a woman's picture in the most derogatory sense of the term, but with a high-cultural tone. Riva gives a remarkably fine performance. Eiji Okada says no more than an analyst might; he is simply a sounding board. And if, being Japanese, he is supposed to represent the world's conscience, he brings an unsuitably bland, professionally sympathetic, and upper-class manner to the function. The images of the two in bed are intercut with what is supposed to be documentary footage of the effect of the bomb on Hiroshima, but some of the footage is from a fictional Japanese atrocity movie. In French. —P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 7.)

In a Lonely Place (1950)—Humphrey Bogart, as a cynical, tired Hollywood screenwriter named Dixon Steele, in an atmospheric but disappointingly hollow murder melodrama directed by Nicholas Ray. In talking to a hat-check girl, Steele discovers that she has read the book he is supposed to adapt to the screen; not wanting the bother of reading it himself, he invites her to his place so he can grill her about it. When the girl is murdered, the police think he did it. Steele is in love with Gloria Grahame (who lives in the same complex of courtyard apartments), but he's under so much pressure because of the police that he almost kills her in a jealous rage. That makes her queasily fearful—and he knows he's lost her. Ray doesn't seem to have had an adequate budget or enough ideas to play with; he keeps the thing going and uses the courtyard setting for a special L.A. feeling, but the dialogue is no more than functional, and there's not much of a supporting cast. (Some people have interpreted the film's murky undertones in terms of the breakup of Ray's marriage to Gloria Grahame; they split when the picture was finished.) Hadda Brooks is the singer in the night-club sequence. From a novel by Dorothy B. Hughes; cinematography by Burnett Guffey; music by George Antheil.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 8.)

Masculine Feminine (1965)—Jean-Luc Godard's graceful, intuitive examination of the courtship rites of "the children of Marx and Coca-Cola." The boy, a pop revolutionary (Jean-Pierre Léaud), is full of doubts and questions. The girl (Chantal Goya) is a yé-yé singer with a thin, reedy little voice; her face is haunting just because it's so empty—she seems alive only when she's looking in the mirror toying with her hair. The film—a combination of journalistic sketches, love lyrics, and satire—is about the differing attitudes of the sexes toward love and war in an atmosphere of total and easy disbelief, when government policies are accepted with the same contempt as TV commercials. The two lovers and their friends are united by their disdain for the world of adults, and by the pop culture that they love. The film includes informal boy-to-boy conversations about women and politics; there is a phenomenal six-minute single-take parody interview conducted by the hero with a Miss Nineteen; and there are two boy-girl sessions that define the meaning of masculine and feminine at that time. Godard captures the awkwardnesses that reveal—the pauses, the pretensions, the mannerisms. He gets at the differences in the way girls are with each other and with boys, and boys with each other and with girls. Not just what they do, but how they smile and look away. In French.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 4-5.)

Miami Blues—This is a pungent, blithely violent thriller—a B movie that doesn't aspire, or pretend, to be anything else. The director, George Armitage, works in a style so laconic and offhand that it could almost pass for nihilistic. It's just low-key professionalism, really, but that's a refreshing quality these days. Armitage knows how to keep the story moving and the action clear, how to find odd, amusing things in crummy locations, and how to stay out of the actors' way. And the actors shine. Alec Baldwin, playing a chipper young psychopath called Junior Frenger, gives a witty, volatile performance. Fred Ward—who is one of the film's producers—plays an amiable, denture-wearing police detective, Hoke Moseley; using an assortment of grins (some, alarmingly, chopperless) and dirty growls, he gives the character an admirable vitality. In the difficult role of Susie—a sweet-natured hooker who becomes Junior's girlfriend—Jennifer Jason Leigh is a delight; she has the intelligence and the originality to play the dumb, childish character with absolute gravity. The movie is nothing to get terribly excited about; in classic B-movie style, it's designed to go nowhere, fast. But it wears its craftiness and its essential no-goodness proudly, like a wiry ex-con with a "Born to Lose" tattoo. Also with Charles Napier. The screenplay, by Armitage, is adapted from a novel by Charles Willeford. Cinematography by Tak Fujimoto.—T.R. (4/23/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, and Loews Paramount.)

My Left Foot—The greatness of Daniel Day-Lewis's performance as the Dubliner Christy Brown, a victim of cerebral palsy who became a painter and a writer, is that he pulls you inside Christy's frustration and rage (and his bottomless thirst). There's nothing soft or maudlin about this movie's view of Christy: he's anguished and locked in, yet excitingly insolent. The movie may tear you apart, but it's the story of a triumphantly tough guy who lived it up, and Day-Lewis's interpretation has some of the sexual seductiveness that was so startling in Olivier's Richard III. This is the first film of the Irish playwright-director Jim Sheridan, who wrote the superb screenplay with another Irish playwright, Shane Connaughton. With Brenda Fricker, Ray McAnally, Fiona Shaw, Ruth McCabe, and Hugh O'Conor playing Christy as a child.—P.K. (10/2/89) (Quad Cinema and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Lincoln Plaza; through May 3. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; starting May 4. . . . ¶ Festival; starting May 4, tentative.)

Nights of Cabiria (1957)—Possibly Federico Fellini's finest film, and a work in which Giulietta Masina earns the praise she received for "La Strada." The structure is a series of episodes in the life of Cabiria (Masina), a shabby, aging, dreamy little Roman streetwalker—a girl whose hard, knowing air is no protection against her fundamental gullibility, which, we finally see, is her humanity and her saving grace. A famous actor (Amedeo Nazzari) picks her up and takes her to his luxurious villa; she goes to a cheap vaudeville show, and when the magician hypnotizes her the innocent dreams of her adolescence pour out; a young man in the audience (François Périer) meets her and proposes to her, etc. Though the film seems free and almost unplanned, each apparent irrelevance falls into place. (It was the basis for the Broadway musical—and the movie musical—"Sweet Charity.") In Italian. —P.K. (Cinema Village; May 4-5.)

Open City (1945)—Roberto Rossellini burst upon the world with this film, made just after the Allies took Rome. The fame of his brutal, melodramatic account of the underground resistance to the Nazi occupation rests on its extraordinary immediacy and its rough, documentary look; at its most startling, it seems "caught" rather than staged. Many Americans, used to slick war films, reacted to it as if it actually were caught, documentary footage, and mistook the great Anna Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi, Maria Michi, and the other actors for nonprofessionals—this despite such stock elements as a rapacious lesbian Gestapo agent and a Hollywood-and-Vine-type Gestapo chief. The plot devices are often opportunistic, but there's a unifying fervor: shot on odds and ends of film stock, with fluctuating electricity, and showing people who a few weeks before had been part of the events, the movie gave us a cross-section of a city under terrible stress. When the initial $25,000 that Rossellini had raised was used up, he and Magnani sold their clothes; Maria Michi, who had hidden men like Togliatti—and the scriptwriter, Sergio Amidei—in her flat, now provided the flat for some of the sequences. Federico Fellini assisted Amidei on the script. In Italian. —P.K. (Thalia SoHo; starting May 9.)

Pretty Woman—The lovers in this romantic comedy, directed by Garry Marshall, are a long-legged, golden-hearted Hollywood Boulevard hooker (Julia Roberts) and a cold, suave corporate raider (Richard Gere). He buys her tasteful (expensive) clothes and shows her how to act "classy"; she opens—in order—his wallet, his fly, and his heart. The only real distinction of this long and rather uneventful diversion is the radical contrast between the stars' performing styles. Roberts is all ebullience and scattershot charm. The kind word for Gere's style is minimal. He's opaque, stubbornly remote; he seems to have faxed his performance in. The wild disparity between the leads' energy levels doesn't give the picture much excitement, though: Marshall sort of splits the difference between Roberts and Gere, and maintains an even, mildly bouncy tone throughout. At its worst, the movie is just unimaginative; at its best, it's pleasant and competent. It's business-as-usual entertainment. Also with Jason Alexander, Laura San Giacomo, Ralph Bellamy, and Hector Elizondo. The screenplay is by J. F. Lawton.—T.R. (Gramercy, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, 8th St. Playhouse, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

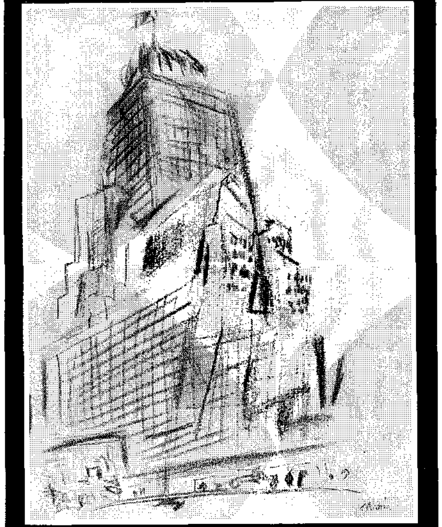
River's Edge (1987)—Teen-age anomie and the indifference of selfish, corrupt adults. The subject might suggest a movie made for TV if it weren't for the explicitly sexual pulp elements and the woozy poetry. The script, by Neal Jimenez, which takes off from an incident in Milpitas, California, in 1981, appears to have been conceived as an exploitation melodrama, but the director, Tim Hunter, has a fuzzy, naturalistic approach, and the movie is a slack mixture of "important" and mediocre—a blur that viewers can project onto. Big-bellied John (Daniel Roebuck), a high-school pothead, strangles his girlfriend, Jamie, and leaves her lying nude on the riverbank. Soon all the members of his pack of six or seven stoned kids have viewed their dead friend, but nobody speaks of notifying the authorities, because Layne (Crispin Glover), the high-strung leader of the group, pressures them to believe that it would be a violation of their code to let any adults know about what happened. The movie doesn't deal with the facts of the Milpitas case (where the murderer was black). It tells us next to nothing about why John killed Jamie and shows us very little of how the other kids react to her death. Then this vacancy at the heart of the film is used as proof of the kids' heartlessness. Glover gives a weird, grimacing, hand-waving performance; other garish elements include Dennis Hopper as a one-legged ex-biker dope dealer who waltzes with an inflatable sex doll, and Joshua Miller as a malicious twelve-year-old who drowns his baby sister's dolly. Also with Keanu Reeves, Ione Skye, and Jim Metzler as the teacher. Cinematography by Frederick Elmes.—P.K. (Cinema Village; May 7-8.)

Swann in Love (1984)—Of all the imaginable material for the screen, Proust's writing requires the most subtle feeling for rhythms—the meaning is in his rhythms—and neither the director (Volker Schlöndorff) nor the scriptwriters (Peter Brook, Jean-Claude Carrière, Marie-Hélène Estienne) seem to do anything to draw us in. The movie doesn't even have the force of real desecration; it's easy to forget you've seen these stiff arrangements of people in ornate, cheerlessly lighted rooms that every instinct tells you they never lived in. Ornella Muti is a wily, plausible Odette, and Alain Delon is, at least, amusing as the Baron de Charlus. But as Swann, Jeremy Irons doesn't suggest intelligence or feeling—he's a stick. Also with Fanny Ardant, Marie-Christine Barrault, and Jacques Boudet. In French.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; May 6.)

Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!—With Antonio Banderas and Victoria Abril, directed by Pedro Almodóvar. In Spanish. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lincoln Plaza; starting May 4.)

The Wages of Fear (1953)—An existential thriller—the most original and shocking French melodrama of the fifties. The opening sequence shows us a verminous South American village and the Europeans trapped in it; they will risk everything for the money to get out. An oil well three hundred miles away has caught fire, and the oil company offers four of them two thousand dollars each to drive two trucks loaded with nitroglycerine (to explode out the fire) over primitive roads. The four are a Corsican (Yves Montand), a Frenchman (Charles Vanel), an Italian (Folco Lulli), and a German (Peter Van Eyck), and the film is about their responses to the gruelling test of driving the trucks. When you can be blown up at any moment only a fool believes that character determines fate. In this situation, courage and caution are almost irrelevant, and ordinary human responses are futile and archaic—yet nothing else is left. If this isn't a parable of man's position in the modern world, it's at least an illustration of it. Henri-Georges Clouzot directed his own adaptation of George Arnaud's novel. His most controversial film, it is also his most powerful. The violence is not used simply for excitement; it's used as in Eisenstein's and Buñuel's films: to force a vision of human experience. With Vera Clouzot and William Tubbs. In French. —P.K. (Thalia SoHo; May 4-5.)

John Marin
New York Drawings



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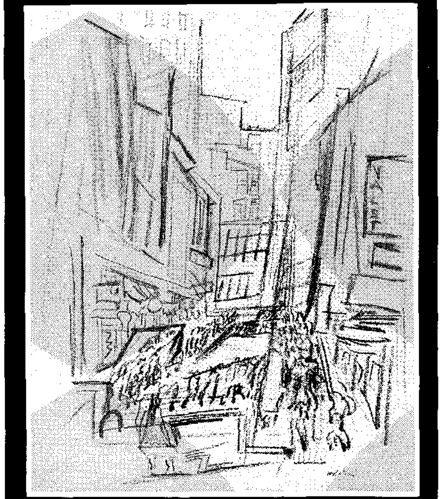

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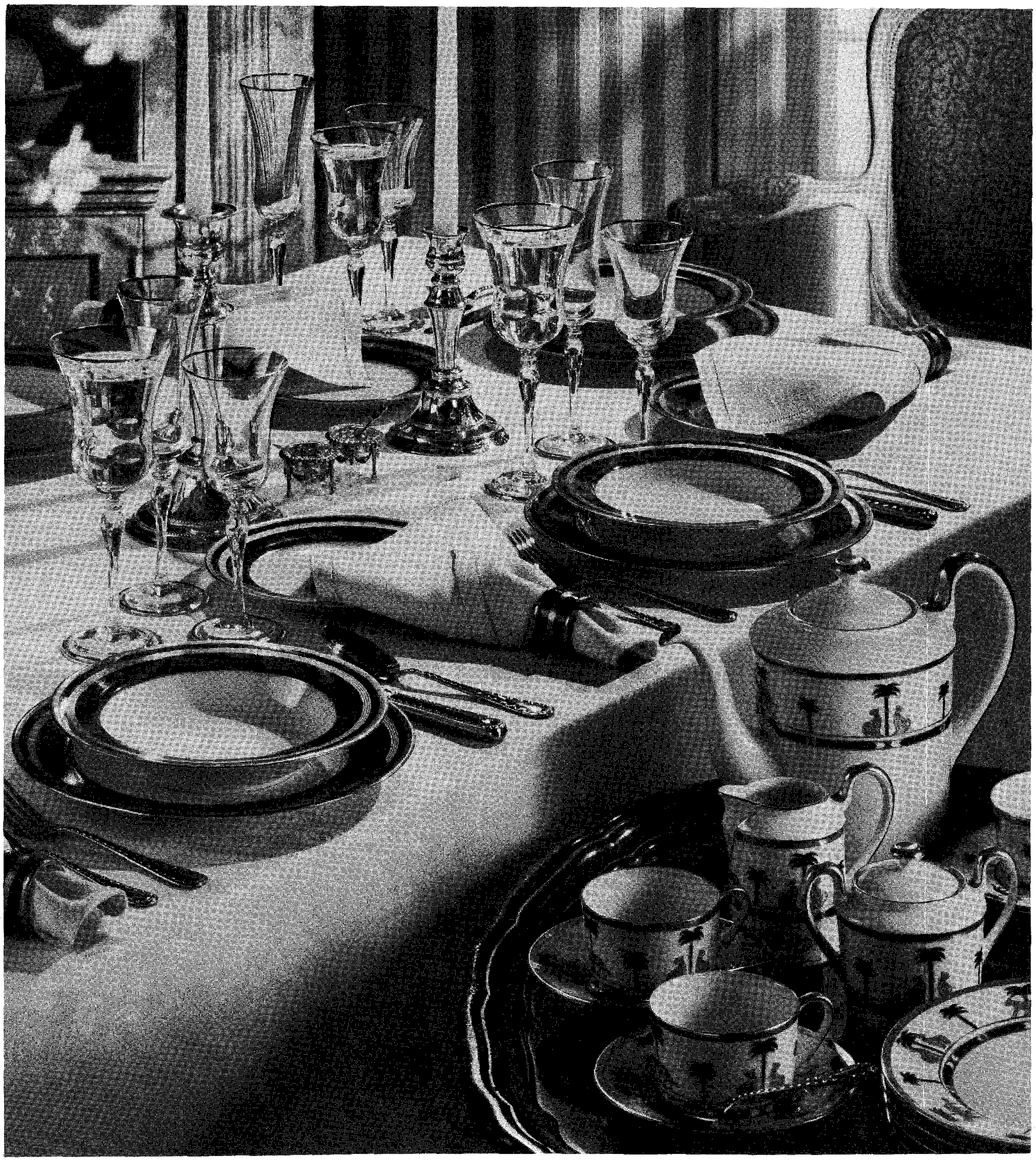

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

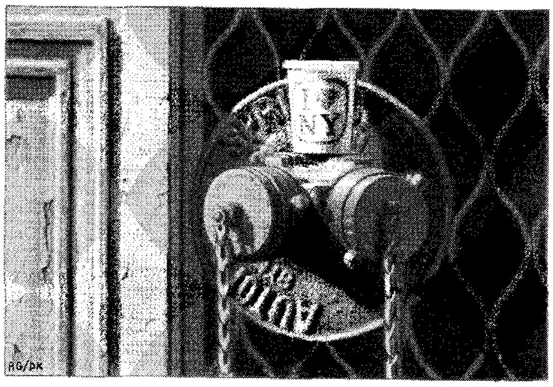
REPORTERS live to cover the big stories, and last year there were plenty of those. Everywhere—in China, in Eastern Europe, in South Africa, in Latin America, in the Soviet Union—the world was changing in extraordinary ways, and the reason we know about the changes is that journalists served, in effect, as witnesses to them on our behalf; they observed at first hand what happened, and then reported their findings to the rest of us. It seems a straightforward arrangement, and, indeed, it is so straightforward that many of us take it for granted. Yet the truth is that journalism can be an extremely hazardous occupation, particularly in countries lacking a strong tradition of freedom of the press, which is to say in most of the world.

"Attacks on the Press 1989," a report recently issued by the Committee to Protect Journalists, which is a nonprofit organization based in New York, contains the alarming news that fifty-three journalists were killed in the line of duty last year—more than twice as many as the year before. Most of the killings took place in Latin America—fourteen journalists died or "disappeared" in El Salvador alone—but other dangerous beats were Lebanon, China, Turkey, and South Africa. In addition, the committee, in a survey of a hundred countries, documented a hundred instances of journalists' being physically attacked; the arrest of three hundred and twenty-five others (seventy-nine of whom remain in captivity today); hundreds of episodes of verbal threat or other forms of legal or bureaucratic harassment; and a doubling of bannings and confiscations of publications. Many Americans know the name of Terry Anderson, the Associated Press reporter who recently began his sixth year in captivity somewhere in Lebanon. "Attacks on the Press 1989" makes it clear that there are scores of Terry Andersons in the world—journalists who have been kidnapped, threatened, tortured, or killed because someone didn't like what they were saying.

One page of the report, picked at random (the offending countries are listed in alphabetical order), notes that two Brazilian journalists for the newspaper *Jornal da Cidade* were shot and killed, apparently because of their reporting on local politics and organized crime; that in Brunei *Newsweek* was censored on three occasions for offenses like writing about the Salman Rushdie affair; that in Bulgaria a foreign reporter was assaulted while covering a meeting of a political-reform group, and a Bulgarian reporter was detained for three days for "spreading false allegations against the government"; and that in Burkina Faso government agents raided the newspaper *L'Observateur* three days after it resumed publication for the first time since a suspicious fire put it out of business in 1984.

Last month, a friend introduced us to María Jimena Duzán, a reporter from Colombia. Until last year, when she was forced into exile, at the age of thirty-one, she had been one of her country's most prominent journalists. Her reputation derived mainly from her outspoken criticisms of Colombia's drug lords in a column she wrote for *El Espectador*, the nation's oldest newspaper. Ms. Duzán was also the paper's foreign editor and a leading member of its investigative team. In 1988, she helped to break the story that Colombia's drug traffickers were not a force unto themselves but worked in close coöperation with the nation's military. This exposé not only directly implicated the military in the violence that was tearing Colombia apart but also threatened to cut off the flow of aid from the United States; indeed, what Ms. Duzán sounded angriest about in our conversation was the refusal of the Bush Administration and Congress to realize that funding the Colombian military in the name of fighting "the drug war" only puts more money in the hands of the enemy. (The latest spasm of violence came just last week, with the assassination aboard a crowded airliner of Carlos Pizarro León-Gómez, a leftist Presidential candidate. Pizarro was the third Presidential candidate killed in Colombia in the last nine months, and the drug traffickers who claimed responsibility for his murder hinted that he wouldn't be the last.)

El Espectador had been a special target of the drug lords long before they declared their infamous "total and absolute war" against the news media, on August 24, 1989. One casualty of this war is *El Espectador's* investigative unit: all its former members are now dead or in exile. And in the past few years assas-



RG/DK

sins, often weaving through downtown traffic jams on motorcycles, have killed five of Ms. Duzán's colleagues, including the paper's editor, Guillermo Cano, and its lawyer, Hector Galvez. After she received death threats herself, and her house was blown up, she began travelling with bodyguards and driving random routes to work, but eventually she, too, had to leave Colombia.

"I feel as if I had got a Ph.D. in death," she told us, and the strain showed in her eyes. She added, with astonishing stoicism, that her sister, also a journalist, had been murdered barely three weeks before. She said little more about the murder, but Sonia Goldenberg, a Peruvian journalist, who is the committee's executive director, told us later that it was a horror streaked with the saddest of ironies. "Sylvia was the younger sister, and, though she wasn't as well known as María, she was well respected by other journalists for her work on the paramilitary in Colombia," Ms. Goldenberg said. "In fact, it was while she was working on a documentary for Britain's Channel 4 about the paramilitary that she was killed. Apparently, she was interviewing three peasant leaders in a restaurant when gunmen burst in and sprayed them with machine-gun fire. The irony is that Sylvia had tried to restrain María from taking unnecessary risks. The day *El Espectador* was bombed, last September, María was so mad she screamed right into the TV cameras that were there, yelling at the drug dealers, 'What do you want? Are you going to kill us all? Because we're not going to stop what we're doing!' Sylvia took her aside afterward and told her that she should be more careful, and not speak so openly. And then it was Sylvia who was killed. That happens a lot—journalists you don't think are in danger are often the ones who end up dead."

Journalists in the United States "risk little more than a snub or an uncomfortable moment should we encounter authorities we have offended," Mary McGrory observes in her preface to "Attacks on the Press 1989," and most of them realize how lucky they are to be practicing their craft here. Yet the committee's report has received rather skimpy coverage by this nation's major news organizations. None of the network evening newscasts mentioned it at all. Neither did such leading national newspapers as the Los Angeles *Times* and the *Wall Street Journal.* This neglect may have been encouraged by a feeling in the news business that it's bad form for journalists to complain about how hard it is to do their jobs; journalists are supposed to cover the story, not *be* the story. But it is important to remember that when journalists are prevented from doing their jobs it is the public who loses most of all.

There is no foolproof way to protect journalists. It would help if the world's governments did more to discourage the practitioners of what Ms. Goldenberg terms "censorship by death," and our own government could have an important influence in this matter: a distressing number of the worst offenders against the freedom of the press are clients or allies of the United States. But the threats come from many directions. Journalists are at risk from governments of the right and of the left, from drug lords, from revolutionary armies, from private security forces. What these groups have in common, besides their brutality, is a preference for working quietly in the dark, and this, of course, suggests that one of the strongest weapons against them is the light. About the only happy part of "Attacks on the Press 1989" is a thank-you letter from Jiri Dienstbier, now Czechoslovakia's Foreign Minister, on behalf of two arrested Prague editors who were released after the committee mounted appeals for their freedom. Perhaps there will be more such letters in the future, acknowledging more such happy results, if more attention is paid, if press and public alike do what they can to say that the world is watching, and that it cares.

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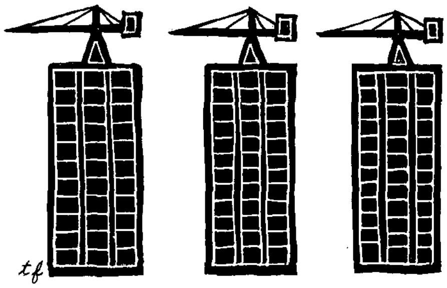
On the Trail

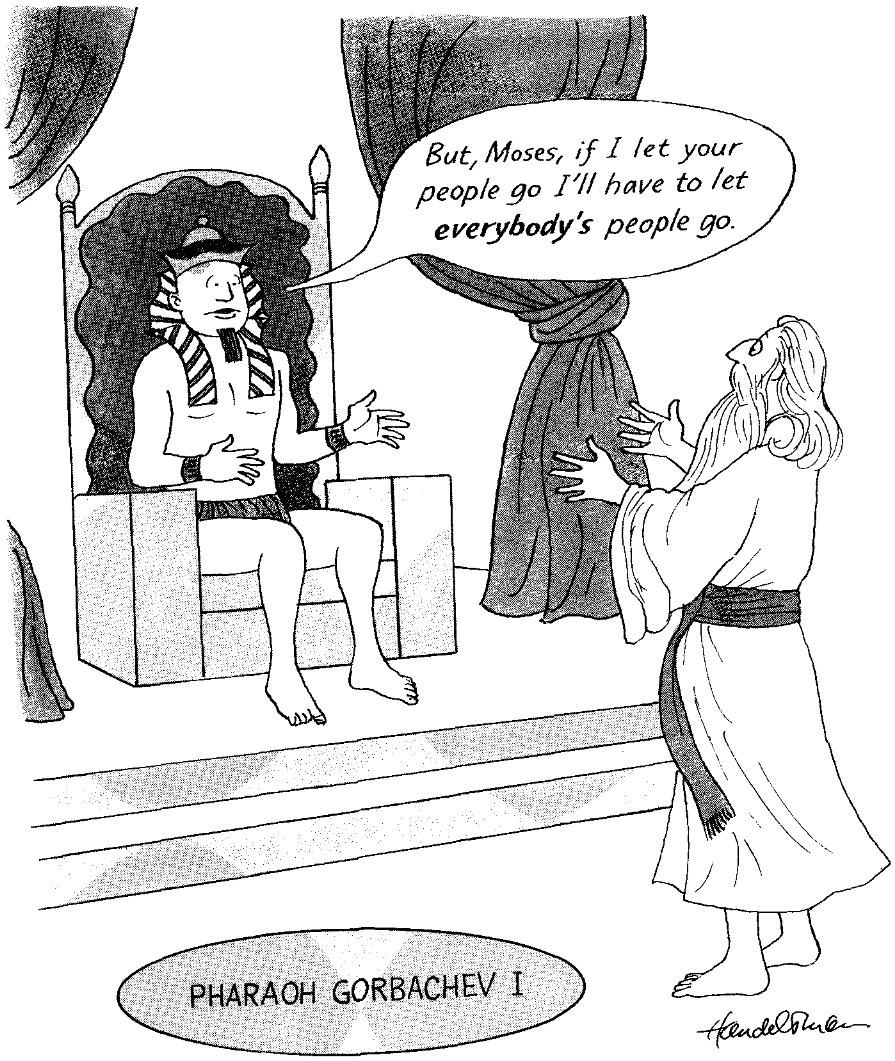
"COME on up front—let's look out the window," Howard Permut said to us, his legs already in motion, as



Metro-North's 10:48 A.M. Harlem Line express for Brewster North burst out of the tunnel under Park Avenue into soft late-March sunshine. Permut, the director for planning and marketing at Metro-North, had invited us to be his guest on a special midday, midweek trek through the hills of southern Dutchess County, and he had on a red-and-blue ski parka, jeans, green-and-gray Gore-Tex hiking boots, and a Casio Alti-Depth Meter, which is a hiker's wristwatch that displays your current altitude digitally, in metres. At that moment, it read "10." Because Permut works for the railroad, he rides in the first car whenever he can. That way, he gets a chance to count the house—to see how full Metro-North's station parking lots are on a given day, or how many people may be on Metro-North platforms, strolling around, or reading papers, or glancing at their watches, ready to board a train.

These days, there are a lot of new cars and heads to count, in large measure because Permut, one of a band of younger transportation professionals who have been recruited for top management jobs at Metro-North by its current president, Peter E. Stangl, has helped push hard to transform Metro-North into a "consumer-driven company"—meaning a company that pays attention to its customers. All Metro-North trains are now heated in the wintertime, air-conditioned all summer long, and kept reasonably clean (the outside of every car is washed at least once a week); because more trains and more cars are now in service, you have a good chance of getting a seat (morning standees have gone down from forty-one hundred a day to around a hundred); and ninety-four per cent of the railroad's trains are running on time. As a result, several regional markets have been opening up for Metro-North: there are more traditional commuters on its trains, more reverse commuters, more intermediate commuters (people going from one suburb to another), and more "discretionary travellers," the last a category that turns up in Metro-North strategic business plans to designate a group that used to be known as passengers—that is, people who are apt to get on a train when they need to make a shopping trip or feel like visiting relatives. Total ridership on the Upper Harlem Line, for instance—where our train at the moment was doing a steady seventy-five miles an hour—has gone up by fifty per cent since 1984.

And our trip was the official preview of another new market, Metro-North's most ambitious linkup so far. A year and a half ago, on a day when Permut was riding the Upper Harlem on an inspection trip, Donald N. Nelson, Metro-North's executive vice-president, said to him, "We just passed the Appalachian Trail." It occurred to Permut—as, back in 1921, it had occurred to the regional planner Benton MacKaye, who in that year published the first proposal for the Appalachian Trail—that a railroad could reach out far beyond its own immediate metropolitan and regional base if it connected itself with a footpath that anchored a wide band of wilderness stretching from Maine to Georgia. MacKaye's original plan for the Appalachian Trail showed rail lines as the main physical bridge between the mountains and the cities of the Eastern states, but somehow this dimension of MacKaye's vision was neglected—at least, until the publication of the Harlem Line's most recent timetable, which went into effect April 1st.


But, Moses, if I let your people go I'll have to let everybody's people go.
PHARAOH GORBACHEV I

We were jumping the gun on that timetable, and at 12:40 P.M., if all schedules were met, a two-car northbound connecting train running from Brewster North up to the end of the line, Dover Plains, would for the first time glide to a halt and set down passengers (in the timetable, the service is available only on weekends and holidays) in a brand-new open-air station right at the spot—it's between Pawling and Wingdale, 65.9 miles north of Grand Central—where the train track crosses the twenty-one-hundred-and-forty-mile Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

The Harlem—the oldest railroad that runs north from New York City—dates from 1832, a time when it was thought that no train line along the shore of the Hudson could ever beat out the steamboats holding sway there. Deer and wild turkeys now regularly cross the Harlem Line roadbed for several miles south of the Appalachian Trail; a great blue heron nests close to the line a mile north of the trail; half a mile farther north, a train hit a coyote a month ago; and a few years back, down near a village called Dykemans, about eight miles south of the trail, a bear raided a farmer's pigpen. The hills that the trail spans in this region have a distinctive shape—steeply dropping wooded eastern slopes, and gently rising western faces, which have been given over to fields for at least two hundred years. The trail itself is an unusual kind of linear national park: the footpath is enclosed within a federally owned corridor of buffer lands about a thousand feet wide, but the rangers are all private citizens—volunteers who maintain the path and monitor conditions along the corridor.

Precisely on time, the connecting train pulled into Brewster North. We climbed aboard, and nineteen minutes later, precisely on time, our new train coasted to a stop at the Appalachian Trail crossing. As we got off, we saw a man jump out of a car and snap our picture. He was Ronald S. Rosen, the chairman of the Dutchess County Appalachian Trail Management Committee, who had agreed to join us for some hiking, and he told us later that the first thing he saw through his lens was a broad grin on Howard Permut's face. The new little station, which a few days before had been nothing but a couple of posts, was now completely finished. "Great," Permut said, gazing around him. "This is a really good job." The wooden platform had been painted with a bright-yellow-green no-skid surface; there was a long, deep, comfortable wooden bench; there was a bulletin board with a timetable inside a locked glass cabinet with a brass knob; there was a big trash barrel; and there was a large painted-metal Metro-North station sign, with the words "APPALACHIAN TRAIL" in black letters on a white background.

The train moved off. A red-winged blackbird flew overhead. We shook hands with Ron Rosen, and he led us out across a long, flat-bottomed cornfield, where two Canada geese scavenging for grain looked up at us, stretched their necks, and honked.

Roles

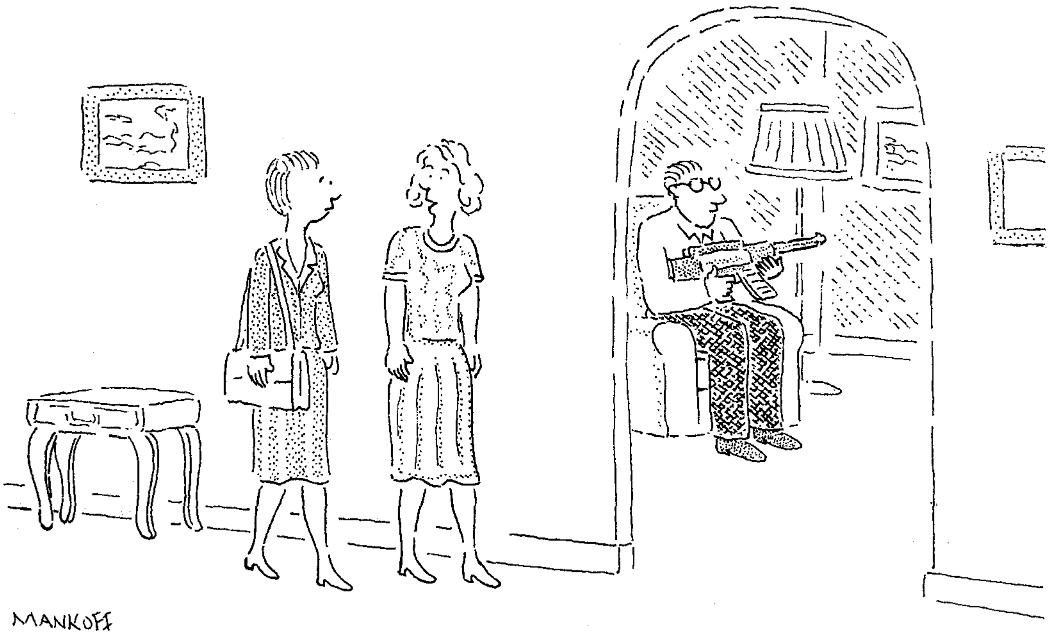
ON a recent Friday morning, Rod Harrison left his home in Tucson, Arizona, where he attends the Tucson High Magnet School, and, taking with him a copy of "The Merchant of Venice," a dog-eared copy of "The Naked Lunch," his authentic nineteen-forties con-man suit, and the mustache and goatee that he has been cultivating for the past six months, got on a plane to come to New York and take part in the English-Speaking Union's annual National Shakespeare Competition. Rod left for New York in a slightly wary, even defensive mood. *His* Shakespeare, he thought, was not likely to be the Shakespeare of anybody else at the competition. Rod's Shakespeare is Grotowski's Shakespeare, Peter Brook's Shakespeare, Artaud's Shakespeare, the Shakespeare you read about in Jan Kott's "Shakespeare Our Contemporary." The Shakespeare you were likely to find at the National Shakespeare Competition, Rod thought, was really, you know, Alistair Cooke's Shakespeare. Rod had prepared to play Lady Anne, from "Richard III," in the competition—"That would have been a really rad, Grotowskian idea," he says—but his drama coach, Jon Hemmeter, had discouraged him. Then he had thought of repeating a speech from his performance last year as Richard—a performance that had been illuminated by Rod's reading of the works of Charles Bukowski. "There are a lot of similarities between the way Bukowski waged war against the world and the way Richard III waged war against the world," Rod says. But Jon had nixed that idea, too. Finally, they had settled on a reading of Shylock's "If you prick us, do we not bleed" speech. "I do it very Theatre of Cruelty, very Grotowski," Rod explains, "but it's the sort of Theatre of Cruelty that you can hope to get away with in a competition where everybody else is a sixteen-year-old girl reciting 'The quality of mercy is not strained.' "

As it happened, Rod's performance as Shylock, on Saturday, did not go over as big as he had hoped—a hidebound segment of the judges' panel perhaps found that it leaned too heavily on the shakes—but by then Rod didn't really care. He had discovered a role within the competition which pleased him more. "I'm the leader of the Grotowskian movement in high-school Shakespeare," he announced happily on Sunday afternoon, at a banquet held at Cooper Union as the climax of the competition. Rod, in fact, was leading a kind of rump caucus of the Shakespeare semi-finalists as they debated the basic Old World–New World issue in Shakespeare interpretation, which had been condensed in the two days of the competition into a simple choice: Cinnamon or Shannon?

Cinnamon was Cinnamon Heathcote-Drury, an exchange student from Devon, England, who, despite the slight handicap of a retainer, had that morning carried all before her in a reading of Lady Anne's lamentation over her dead husband and a recitation of the "Fortune and men's eyes" sonnet. "When I heard her yesterday, I thought, Shakespeare goes *ballistic*," Abigail Derecho, of the Narbonne High School, in Los Angeles, was saying as everybody got to work on plates of pasta salad and baked ham. "It isn't fair to have somebody that good in this competition."

"That's standard, classical English style," Rod explained patiently. "Where she comes from, you can't throw a brick without hitting somebody who can do Lady Anne like that. If I have to choose between conventional interpretations, I'll take Shannon's. It was clean, open, virginal, *American* Shakespeare. It's sort of school-of-Peter Sellars. I think it's *essentially* provincial. I mean, it's not exactly Peter Brook. But it's sound." Shannon was Shannon Emerick, an extremely poised sixteen-year-old from Dallas, who attends the Greenhill School there and had in the last two days twice declared her love for Bassanio as Portia in "The Merchant of Venice." "I like that speech," she had explained, "because here she's met the first guy she could ever really give herself to, and she does it so honestly." Though there had been four other contestants in the finals, just about everybody agreed that it came down to those two. The competition was so close, in fact, that after the finals, that morning, the judges had announced that they were unable to reach a verdict, and had sent everybody off to eat lunch, promising to show up as soon as they had made up their minds.

"Oh dear, I hope we're not putting too much pressure on these children," one of the competition organizers had said at the entrance to the Cooper Union dining

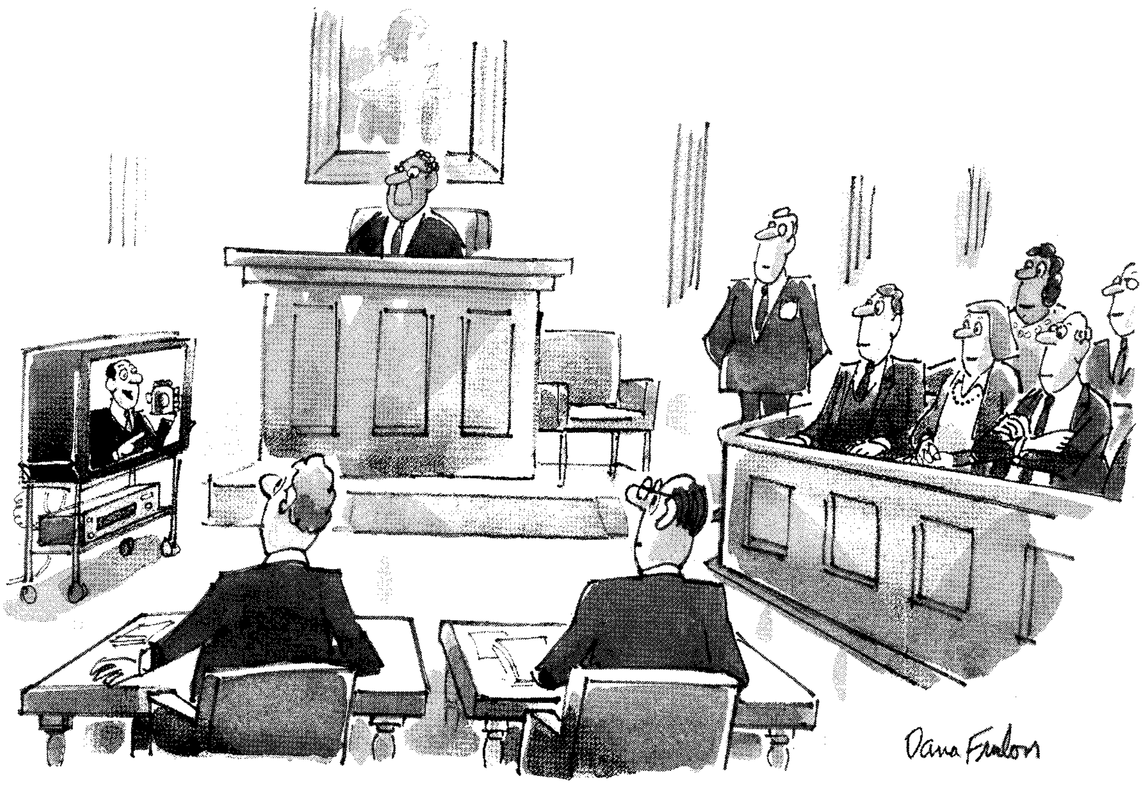


"We're pretty traditional around here. I handle everything on the domestic front except security."

hall as she handed out puppets of Shakespeare characters—which were going to be used as tokens in a "Shakespearean tombola," a kind of Elizabethan raffle—to the arriving contestants. Inside the hall, all the young Shakespeareans held the puppets absentmindedly on their laps. Reporters prowled around trying to find stories.

"What's the most memorable experience you'll take back with you?" a reporter for Channel One, the news network that is broadcast to high schools around the country, asked a young Hermia from the Midwest.

She thought it over. "Well, I suppose it was making out on the roof of the hotel," she said.



"Before I start my taped testimony, I should like to say a few words about Fenton's Naturally Decaffeinated Coffee."

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Rod tried to lead the conversation back to the issue of interpretations. "Cinnamon's Anne was bravura Shakespeare," he said loftily. "I *hate* bravura Shakespeare. I'm not just interested in the Theatre of Cruelty—I'm interested in *epic* Theatre of Cruelty."

A Cordelia from Cleveland called out to Rod, "Can I have your copy of 'The Naked Lunch' after we eat? My parents won't let me read it, but my boyfriend keeps saying to me, 'You must read "Naked Lunch."' "

"Sure!" Rod called back. He added, more quietly, to his intimates, "The first time I read 'Naked Lunch,' I slept with it under my pillow for a whole month."

The judges still hadn't appeared.

"Do you think there are, like, politics involved in this decision?" Abigail asked Rod.

Rod looked at her pityingly. "It's *all* politics," he explained. "What you're witnessing is, first of all, a big, nuclear struggle between the two drama coaches. That's first. Second, they're yapping at each other about whether some exchange student can just walk in over here and take the American Shakespeare medal. That's second."

Whatever the politics were, here is how the competition turned out: runner-up, Cinnamon; first prize, Shannon.

"What did I tell you?" Rod said triumphantly. "Peter Sellars beats Peter Hall."

Then Shannon made a demure speech, and a reporter interviewed her mother, who had come to New York with her.

"She's a very thoughtful young lady," Shannon's mother explained. "She realizes that the theatre is wonderful, but she also sees the value of a good, sound undergraduate degree. She's not been difficult to deal with on that issue."

Then there was the raffle, and after that some prizes were awarded. Rod won one for "Best Shakespeare Look-Alike." He had figured he would win something, and had planned to do the Sally Field bit, but he couldn't, because the guy before him had done it. Afterward, when everyone was milling around out on the pavement, waiting for buses to the airport, Rod managed to isolate the Channel One camera crew and did his whole scene for them. He marched around and pushed himself into the camera as he declaimed "Warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer," and finally the sheer intensity of his performance pushed the whole camera crew right out into the street, so that all present—the crew, Rod, and the other contestants, who were trailing along in awe—were actually in danger from the cars that whizzed past, just the way Grotowski would have wanted.

Sign of Spring

NOTICE observed in the window of a shoe store in Rockport, Massachusetts:

TO ALL MY CUSTOMERS

I am giving up my paper route so that I can play baseball.

Thank you all for being so nice. It was a lot of fun.

I am sorry if I messed up sometimes. If anyone is behind in paying, please try to catch up, by the above date. If you don't know how much you owe, just take a guess because I don't know either. I had sort of an honor system paper route.

Thanks again.
PETER

MY FATHER LEAVES HOME

THE houses turn aside from the village street, lengthwise, to be private. But they're painted with flowery and fruity scrolls and garlands. Blossoming vines are strung like washing along the narrow porches' diminishing perspective. Tomatoes and daisies climb together behind picket fences. Crowded in a slot of garden are pens and cages for chickens and ducks, and there's a pig. But not in the house he came from; there wouldn't have been a pig.

The post office is made of slatted wood with a carved valance under the roof—a post-office sign is recognizable anywhere, in any language, although this is one from a time before airmail: not a stylized bird but a curved post horn with cord and tassels. It's from here that the letters would have gone, arranging his passage. There's a bench outside and an old woman sits there shelling peas. She's wearing a black scarf tied over her head, and an apron; she has the lipless closed mouth of someone who has lost teeth. How old? The age of a woman without estrogen pills, hair-tint charts, sunscreen, and anti-wrinkle creams. She packed for him. The clothes of a cold country—he had no others. She sewed up rents and darned socks. And what else? A cap, a coat; a boy of thirteen might not have owned a hand-me-down suit yet. Or one might have been obtained specially for him, for the voyage, for the future.

Horse-drawn carts clomp and rattle along the streets. Wagons sway to the gait of fringe-hooved teams on the roads between towns, delaying cars and buses back into another century. He was hoisted onto one of these carts with his bag, wearing the suit; certainly the cap. Boots newly mended by the member of the family whose trade this was. There must have been a shoemaker among them; that was the other choice open to him: he could have learned shoemaking but had decided for watchmaking. They must have equipped him with the loupe for his eye and the miniature screwdrivers and screws, the hairsprings, the fish-scale watch glasses; these would be in his bag as well. And some religious necessities: the shawl, the things to wind around his arm and brow. She wouldn't have forgotten those; he was thirteen, they had kept him home and fed him at least until their religion said he was a man.

At the station the Gypsies are singing in the bar. It's night. The train sweats a fog of steam in the autumn cold and he could be standing there somewhere, beside his bag, waiting to board. She might have come with him this far, but more likely not—when he clambered up to the cart, that was the end for her. She never saw him again. The man with the beard, the family head, was there. He was the one who had saved for the train ticket and ship's passage. There are no farewells; there's no room for sorrow in the drunken joy of the Gypsies filling the bar, the shack glows with their heat, a hearth in the dark of the night. The bearded man is going with his son to the sea, where the old life ends. He will find him a place in the lower levels of the ship, he will hand over the tickets and bits of paper that will tell the future who the boy was.

WE had bought smoked paprika sausage and slivovitz for the trip. The party was too big to fit into one car, so it was more fun to take a train. Among the padded shotgun sleeves and embossed-leather gun cases we sang and passed the bottle round, finding one another's remarks uproarious. The Frenchman had a nest of thimble-size silver cups and he sliced the sausage toward his thumb, using a horn-handled knife from the hotel gift shop in the capital. The Englishman tried to read a copy of Cobbett's "Rural Rides," but it lay on his lap while the clear liquor opened up in him unhappiness in his marriage that he confided to a woman he had not met before. Restless with pleasure, people went in and out of the compartment, letting in a turned-up volume of motion and buffets of fresh air; with my forehead resting against the corridor window, I saw nothing but trees, trees, the twist of a river with a rotting boat, the fading Eastern European summer, distant from the sun.

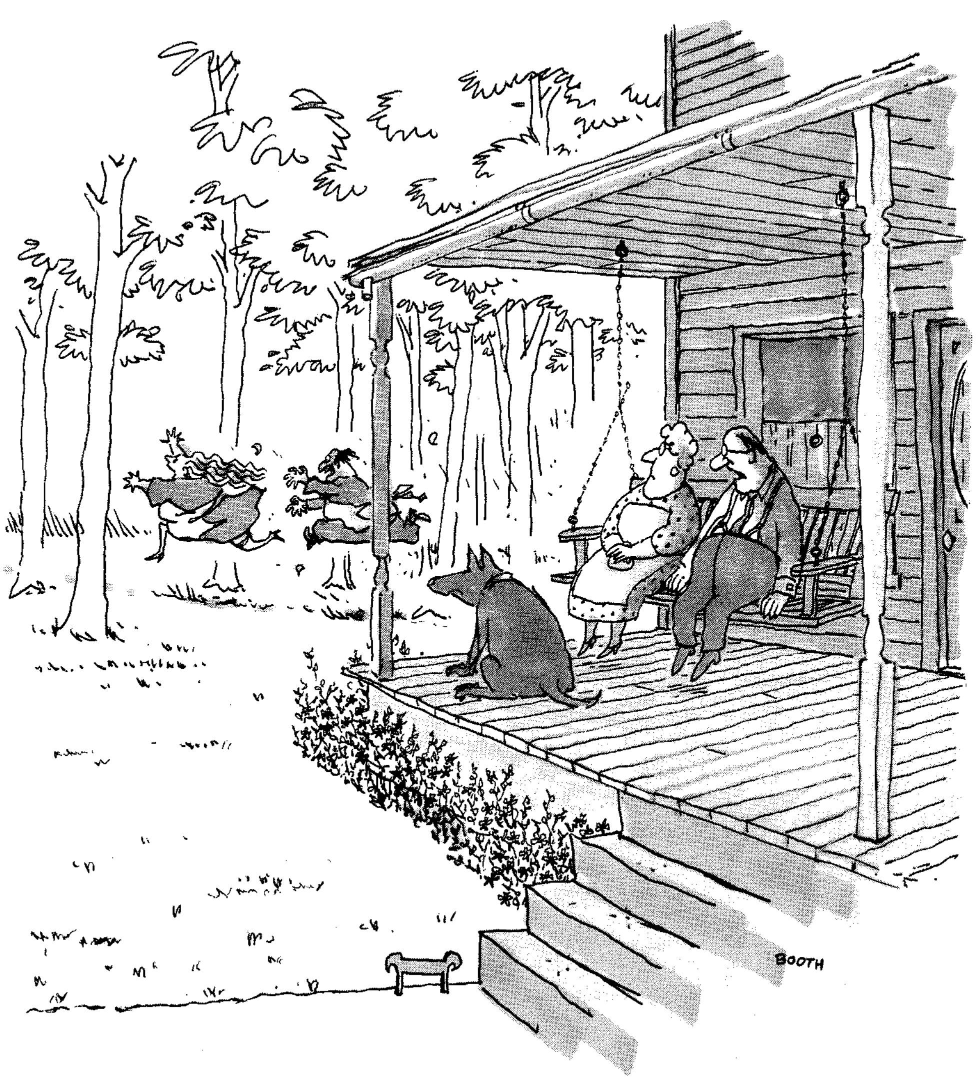
Back inside to catch up with the party: someone was being applauded for producing a bottle of wine, someone else was taking teasing instruction on how to photograph with a newfangled camera. At the stations of towns nobody looked at—the same industrial intestines of factory yards and junk tips traversed by railway lines wherever in the world we came from—local people boarded and sat on suitcases in the corridors. One

"Business isn't everything."

man peered in persistently and we were in the mood to make room for him somehow in the compartment. Nobody could speak his language and he couldn't speak ours, but the wine and sausage brought instant, surprised communication; we talked to him whether or not he could follow the words, and he shrugged and smiled with the delighted and anguished responses of one struck dumb by strangers. He asserted his position only by waving away the slivovitz—that was what foreigners naturally would feel obliged to drink. And when we forgot about him while we argued over a curious map the state hunting organization had given us—not ethnic or geographic but showing the distribution of water- and wildfowl in the area we were approaching—I caught him looking us over, one by one, trying to read the lives we came from, uncertain from unfamiliar signs whether to envy, to regard with cynicism, or to be amused. He fell asleep. And I studied him.

No one from the hunting lodge had come to meet us at the village station circled on the map. It was night. Autumn cold. We stood about and stamped our feet in the adventure of it. There was no stationmaster. A telephone booth, but whom could we call upon? "All-inclusive; you will be escorted by a guide and interpreter everywhere," the agent had said—so we had not thought to take the telephone number of the lodge. There was a wooden shack in the darkness, blurry with thick yellow light and noise. A bar! The men of the party went over to join the one male club that has reciprocal membership everywhere; the women were uncertain whether they would be acceptable—the customs of each country have to be observed: in some you can bare your breasts, in others you are indecent if wearing trousers. The Englishman came back and forth to report: men were having a wild time in the shack, they must be celebrating something, they were some kind of brotherhood, black-haired and unshaven, drunk. The rest of us sat on our baggage in the mist of steam left by the train, a dim caul of visibility lit by the glow of the bar, and our world fell away sheer from the edge of the platform. Nothing. At an unknown stage of a journey to an unknown place, suddenly unimaginable.

An old car splashed into the station yard. The lodge manager fell out on his feet like a racing driver. He wore a green felt hat with badges and feathers fastened round the band. He spoke our language, yes. It's not good there, he said when the men of our party came out of the bar. You watch your pocket. Gypsies. They don't work, only steal, and make children so the government will give them money every time.



"The Hewletts have flaming crown roast au vin blanc every Wednesday."

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THE moon on its back.

One of the first things he would have noticed when he arrived in Cape Town was that the moon in the Southern Hemisphere lies the wrong way round. The sun still rises in the east and sets in the west, but the one other certainty to be counted on—that the same sky that covers his old village covers the whole earth—is gone. What greater confirmation of how far away: looking up on the first night.

He might have learned a few words on the ship. Perhaps he was met at the port by someone who had preceded him by a year or so. He was put on a train that travelled for two days through vineyards and mountains and then the desert; but already long before the ship landed he must have been too hot in the suit, coming south. On the high plateau he arrived at the gold mines, to be entrusted to a relative. The relative had been too proud to explain earlier by post that he was too poor to take the boy in, but the wife made this clear. The boy took the watchmaking tools he had been provided with, and went to the mines. And then? He waylaid

PERFECTION WASTED

And another regrettable thing about death
is the ceasing of your own brand of magic,
which took a whole life to develop and market—
the quips, the witticisms, the slant
adjusted to a few, those loved ones nearest
the lip of the stage, their soft faces blanched
in the footlight glow, their laughter close to tears,
their tears confused with their diamond earrings,
their warm pooled breath in and out with your heartbeat,
their response and your performance twinned.
The jokes over the phone. The memories packed
in the rapid-access file. The whole act.
Who will do it again? That's it: no one;
imitators and descendants aren't the same.

—John Updike

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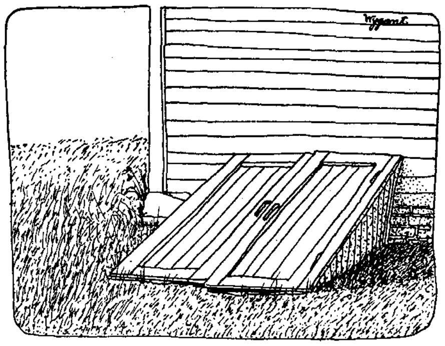
white miners, and replaced balance wheels and broken watch faces while-you-wait; he went to the compounds where black miners had proudly acquired watches as the manacles of their new slavery—to shift-work. In this country, their own, they were migrants from their homes, like him. They had only a few words of the language, like him. While he picked up English he also picked up the terse jargon, a mix of English and their languages, that the miners were taught so that work orders could be understood. *Fanagalo:* "Do this, do it like this"—a vocabulary of command. So straight away he knew that, even if he was poor and alien, at least he was white; he spoke his broken phrases from the rank of the commanders to the commanded: the first indication of who he was now. And the black miners' watches were mostly cheap ones not worth mending. They could buy a new one for the price he would have to ask for repairs; he bought a small supply of Zobo pocket watches and hawked them at the compounds. So it was because of the blacks that he became a businessman: another indication.

And then?

Zobos were fat metal circles with a stout ring at the top and a loud tick tramping out time. He had a corrugated-tin-roofed shop with his watchmaker's bench in a corner and watches, clocks, and engagement and wedding rings for sale. The white miners were the ones whose custom it was to mark betrothals with adornments bought on the installment plan. They promised to pay so much a month; on the last Friday, when they had their wages, they came to him from the hotel bar smelling of brandy. He taught himself to keep books, and carried their bad debts into the Depression of the thirties.

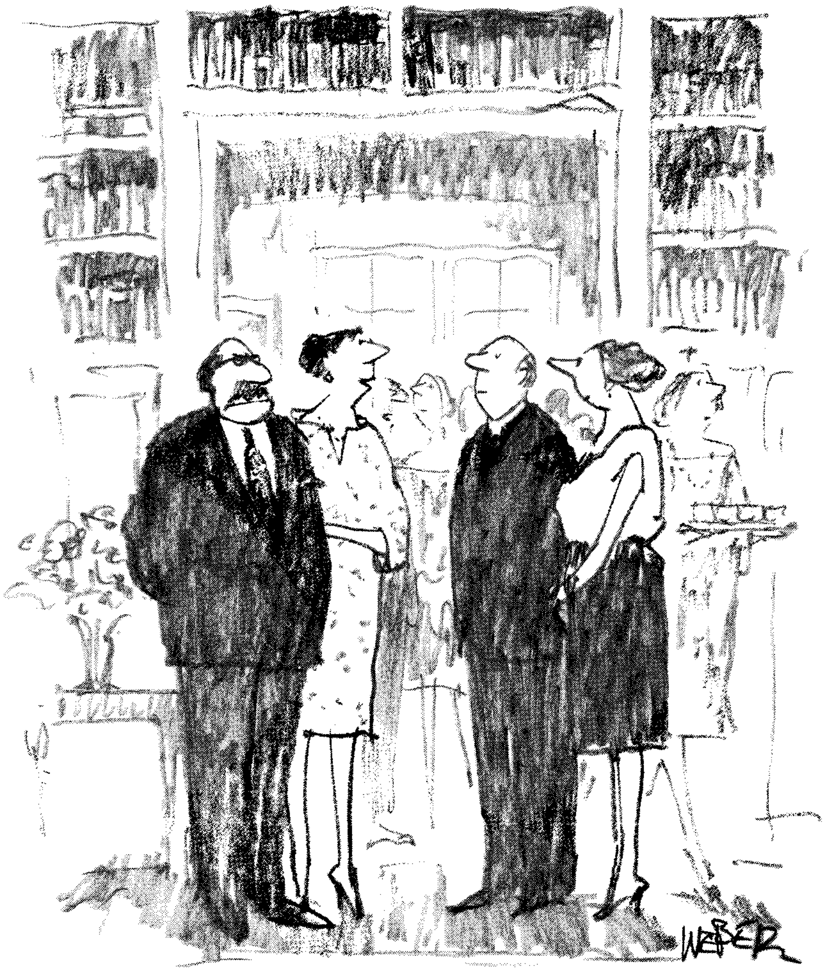
He was married, with children, by then. Perhaps his parents had offered to send a girl out for him, a home girl with whom he could make love in his own language and who would cook according to the dietary rules. That was the custom for men coming from those villages; he surely could have afforded the girl's fare. But if they knew he had left the tin shack behind the shop, where he had slept when first he became a businessman, certainly they couldn't imagine him living in the local hotel, where the white miners drank and he ate meat cooked by blacks. He took singing lessons and was inducted into the Masonic lodge. Above the rolltop desk in the office behind his new shop, with its sign "Watchmaker Jeweller & Silversmith," was an oval, gilt-framed studio photograph of him in the apron of his Masonic rank.

He made another move; he successfully courted a young local woman whose mother tongue was English. From the village above which the moon turned the other way, there came as a wedding gift only a strip of gray linen covered with silk embroidery in flowers and scrolls. The old woman who sat on the bench must have done the needlework long before, saved it for the anticipated occasion, because by the time of the distant marriage she was blind (so someone wrote). Injured in a pogrom . . . or was that a supposition, an exaggeration of woes back there, used by those who had left all behind to dramatize their escape? More likely cataracts, in that village with no surgeon available. We, her granddaughters in the Southern Hemisphere, discovered the piece of embroidery stuck away behind lavender-scented towels and pillowcases in our mother's linen cupboard, and used it as a carpet for our doll's house.



The English wife played the piano and we children sang round her, but he didn't sing. Apparently his lessons were given up; sometimes the wife laughed with friends over how he had been told he was a light baritone, and at Masonic concerts sang ballads with words by Tennyson—as if he knew who Tennyson was! By the time I, the younger daughter, became curious about the photograph looking down behind its bulge of convex glass in the office, he had stopped going to Masonic meetings. Once, coming home from such an occasion, he had driven into the garage wall; the damage was referred to in moments of family tension, again and again. But perhaps he gave up that rank because when he got into bed beside her in the dark after those Masonic gatherings she turned away, with her potent disgust, from the smell of whiskey on him.

If the phylacteries and skullcap were kept somewhere, we children never saw them. He went fasting to the synagogue on the Day of Atonement, and each year, on the anniversaries of the deaths in that village of the old people whom the wife and children had never seen, he went again to light a candle. Feeble flame: who were they? In the quarrels between husband and wife, she derided them as ignorant and dirty; she must have read somewhere something that served as a taunt: "You slept like animals round a stove, stinking of garlic; you bathed once a week." We children knew how low it was to be unwashed. And, whipped into anger, he knew the lowest category of all in her country, this country: *You speak to me as if I were a kaffir.*



"My husband adheres to the big-bang theory of creation."

• •

THE silence of cold countries at the approach of winter. On an island of mud, where a village track parts like two locks of wet hair, there still stands a war memorial crowned with the emblem of an occupying empire that has been lost and succeeded by others, and still others. Under one or the other of these they lived, mending shoes and watches, eating garlic, and sleeping round the stove. In the graveyard, stones lean against one another and sink to different levels from one occupation and revolution to the next—the Zobos tick them off; the old woman shelling peas on the bench and the bearded man at the dockside lie in mounds that are all like cenotaphs because the script that records the names is a language he forgot and his daughters never knew.

A burst of children out of school alight like pigeons round the war monument. Unimaginable to them that they cannot be understood as they chatter, stare, giggle at the foreigners, and—the bold ones—question us. As with the man in the train, from the tone, the expression on the faces, and the curiosity, their meaning is clear:

Who are you?

Where do you come from?

A map of Africa drawn with a stick in the mud.

Africa! The children punch each other and jig in recognition. They close in. One of them tugs at the gilt ring glinting in the ear of a little girl, dark and hairy-curly as a poodle. They point: *gold.*

Those others in this land knew about gold, long ago; for the poor and despised there is always the idea of gold somewhere else. That's why they packed him off when he was thirteen and—according to their beliefs—a man.

AT four in the afternoon the old moon bleeds radiance into the gray sky. In the wood, a thick plumage of fallen oak leaves is laid as reverentially as the feathers of the dead pheasants that swing from the beaters' belts. The beaters are coming across the great fields of maize in the first light of the moon. The guns probe its halo. Where I wait—apart, out of the way, hidden—I hear the rustle of fear among creatures. Their feathers swish against stalks and leaves. The clucking to gather in the young, the spurting squawks of terror as the men with their thrashing sticks drive the prey racing on, rushing this way and that: there's no way where there are not men and sticks, men and guns. The creatures have wings but dare not fly and reveal themselves; there was nowhere to run from the village to the fields as the pursuers came on and on, the kick of a cossack's mount ready to strike cringing heads, the thrust of a bayonet lifting a man by the heart like a piece of meat on a fork. Death advancing, and nowhere to go. Blindness coming by fire or shot, and no way out to see, shelling peas by touch. Cracks of detonation and a wild agony of flutter all around me, I crouch away from the sound and sight—only a spectator, only a spectator, please!—but the cossack's hooves rode those pleading wretches down. A bird thuds dead, striking my shoulder before it hits the soft bed of leaves beside me.

SIX leaves from my father's country. When I began to know him, in his shop, as someone distinct from a lap I sat on, he shouted at the black man on the other side of the counter who swept the floor and ran errands, and he threw the man's weekly pay grudgingly at him. I saw there was someone my father had made afraid of him. A child understands fear, and the hurt and hate it brings.

I gathered the leaves for their pretty autumn stains, not out of any sentiment. This village where we've rented the state hunting lodge is not my father's village. I don't know where, here in his country, that was; I know only the name of the port where he left it behind. I didn't ask him about his village. He never told me; or I didn't listen. I have the leaves in my hand. I did not know that I would find, here in the wood, the beaters advancing, advancing across the world.

—NADINE GORDIMER

EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE

Stretching long legs to brace her boots against the bulkhead, as the plane heads upward from Toronto into gray mid-October air, Lila Lewisohn, a very tall, exhausted psychiatrist—a week of meetings has almost done her in, she feels—takes note of the advantages of this seat: enough legroom, and somewhat out of the crush. Also, the seat next to hers is vacant. At least, she thinks, the trip will be comfortable; maybe I can sleep.

But a few minutes into the air the plane is gripped and shaken. Turbulence rattles everything, as passengers clutch their armrests, or neighboring human arms, if they are travelling with friends or lovers. Lila, for whom this is a rather isolated period, instead grips her own knees, and grits her teeth, and prays—to no one, or perhaps to a very odd bunch: to God, in whom she does not believe; to Freud, about whom she has serious doubts; to her old shrink, who is dead; to her mother, also dead, and whom she mostly did not like. And to her former (she supposes it now is former) lover, Julian Brownfield, also a shrink.

Lila and Julian, in training together in Boston, plunged more or less inadvertently from a collegial friendship into heady adulterous love—a love (and a friendship) that for many years worked, sustaining them both through problematic marriages. But in the five or six years since the dissolutions of those marriages a certain troubled imbalance has set in. Most recently, Julian has taken back his ex-wife, Karen, an alcoholic pianist who is not doing well with recovery, and has just violently separated from another husband. "Sheltering" might be Julian's word for what he is doing for Karen—Lila would call it "harboring," or worse: if Karen behaved well, she might stay on forever there with Julian, Lila at least half-believes. She has so far refused to see Julian, with Karen there.

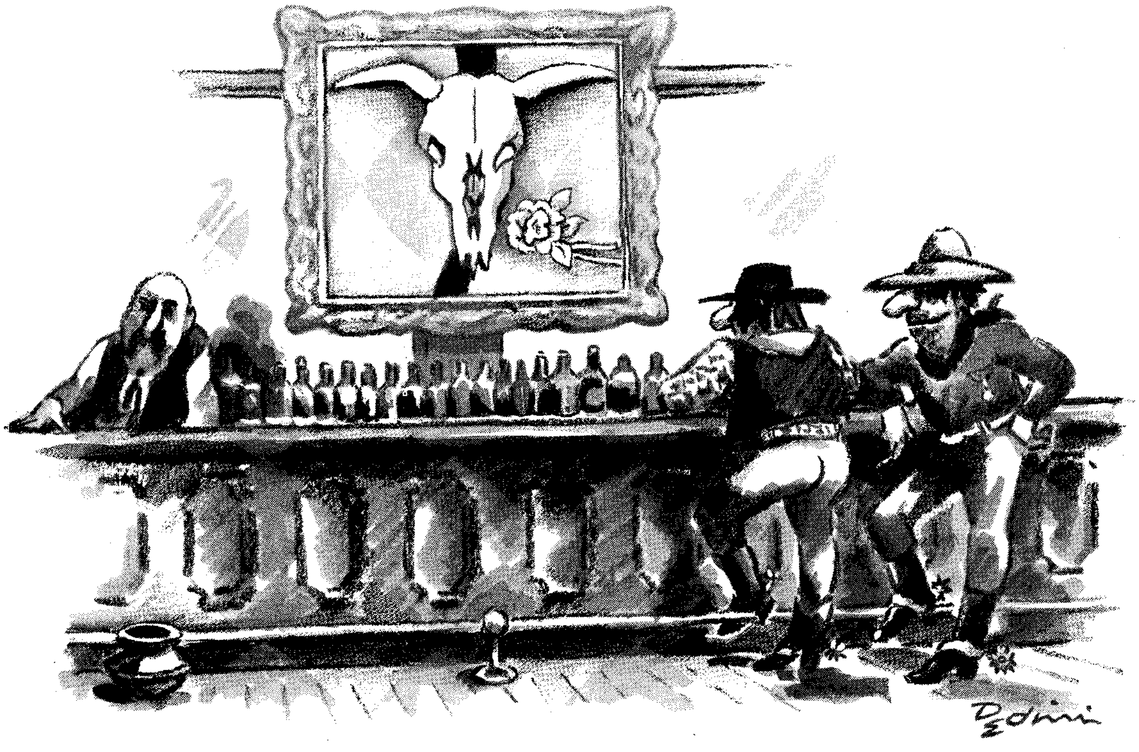
In any case, Lila now prays to all those on her list, and especially to Julian, to whom she says, I'm just not up to all this; I'm really running on empty. *Please.*

Her meetings, held in the new Harbourfront section of Toronto, in an excellent hotel with lovely, wide lake views, were no more than routinely tiring, actually; Lila was forced to admit to herself that it was the theme of the conference that afflicted her with a variety of troubling feelings. It was a psychiatric conference on the contemporary state of being single, though of course certain newspaper articles vulgarized it into "A New Look at Singles," "Singles: Shrinks Say the New Minority." Whereas in fact the hours of papers and discussion had ranged about—had included the guilt that many people feel over their single state; social ostracism, subtle and overt; myths of singleness; the couple as conspiracy; plus practical problems, demographics, and perceived changes over the last several generations. And Lila found that she overreacted—she was reached, touched, shaken by much that was said. She had trouble sleeping, despite long lap swims in the hotel's glassed-in pool, with its views of Canadian skies across Lake Ontario.

Now, very tired, she braces herself against the turbulence, and against certain strong old demons in her mind. And then, as though one of those to whom she has prayed were indeed in charge, the turbulence ends. The huge plane zooms peacefully through a clear gray dusk. Westward, toward San Francisco. A direct flight.

Lila must have fallen asleep, for she is startled awake by the too loud voice of the pilot, over the intercom: "Sorry, folks. We've just had news of a very mild earthquake in the San Francisco area, very mild but a little damage to the airport, so we'll be heading back to Toronto."

An instant of silence is followed by loud groans from the rows and rows of seats behind Lila's bulkhead. Groans and exclamations: *Oh no*, *Jesus Christ*, *all we need*, *an earthquake*. Turning, she sees that a great many people are standing up, moving about, as if there were anything to do. One man, though—trenchcoated, lean, dark blond, almost handsome—makes for the telephone up on the wall near Lila's seat. Seizing it, he begins to dial, and dial and dial. Lila gestures that he can sit down in the empty seat, and he does so, with a twisting grimace. Then "Can't get through, *damn*," he says. "My family's down on the Peninsula." He dials again, says "Damn," again, then asks Lila, "Yours?"



"Oh. Uh, San Francisco."

"Well, San Francisco's better. Guy with a radio said the epicenter's in Hollister."

"I wonder about that 'mild.' " Lila leans toward him to whisper.

"No way it could be mild. They're not closing down the airport for any mild earthquake."

Which is pretty much what Lila had already thought.

"Well, I guess I better let someone else try to phone."

"There's one on the other side," Lila tells him, having noticed this symmetrical arrangement on entering the plane.

"Oh, well then." But after a few minutes, muttering, he gets up and goes back to his seat, as Lila realizes that she wishes he had stuck around—not that she was especially drawn to him; she simply wanted someone there.

People are by now crowding around the two phones, pressing into the passageway between the aisles. A man has managed to get through to his sister-in-law, in Sacramento, and soon everyone has his news: it is a major quake. Many dead. The bridge down.

At that last piece of news, about the bridge, Lila's tired heart is drenched with cold, as she thinks: Julian. Julian, who lives in Mill Valley and practices in San Francisco, could be on the bridge at any time. Especially now, just after five in San Francisco. Commuter time.

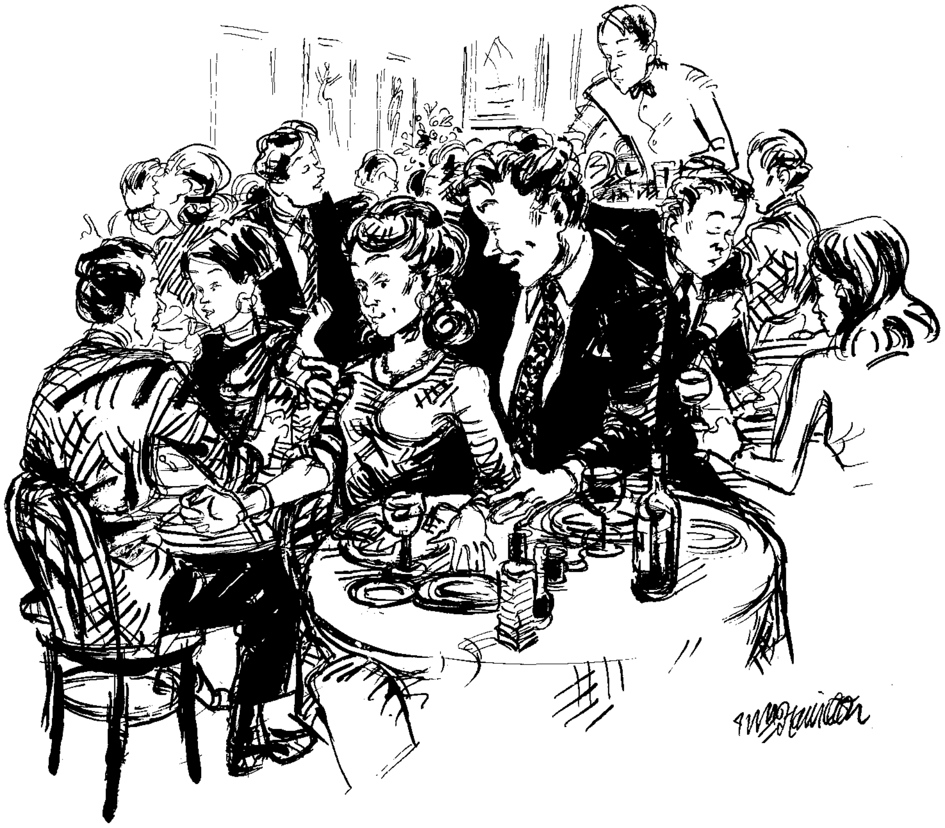
On the other hand, almost anyone *could* have been on the bridge, especially anyone who lives in Marin County. Fighting panic, Lila says this firmly to herself: anyone does not mean Julian, necessarily. A major disaster involving the bridge does not necessarily involve Julian Brownfield. Not necessarily. She is gripping her knees, as during the turbulence; with an effort she unclenches her fingers and clasps her hands together on her lap, too tightly.

"How about the game?" someone near her is saying.

"No stadium damage, I heard."

"Lucky it wasn't a little later. People leaving, going back to Oakland."

As, very slowly, these sentences penetrate Lila's miasma of anxiety, she understands: they are talking about the Bay Bridge. The Bay Bridge was damaged, not the Golden Gate. Traffic to the East Bay, not to Marin, Mill Valley.



"Isn't it kind of incredible that both of us, at this exact same moment, are unemployed?"

• •

What Lila feels then, along with extreme relief, is an increase of exhaustion; her nerves sag. And she has, too, the cold new thought that Julian, an unlikely fan, could well have gone to the game. (Taken Karen to the game?) Could have left early, and been overtaken by the earthquake, anywhere at all.

Rising from her seat, intending to walk about, she sees that everyone else is also trying to move. They all seem to protest the event, and their situation, with restless, random motion. Strangers confront and query each other along the packed aisles: Where're you from? Remember the quake last August? The one in '72? In '57? How long were you in Toronto? Like it there? But not enough to make you want to go back right away, right?

At last they begin the descent into Toronto, strapped in, looking down, and no one notices the turbulence that they pass through.

IN Julian's house, high up on the wooded crest above Mill Valley, there is total chaos: in the front hall, two large suitcases lie open and overflowing—a crazy tangle of dresses and blouses, sweaters, silk nightgowns, panty hose, and shoes thrown all over.

"Anyone coming in," Julian comments from a doorway, "anyone would think the earthquake, whereas actually—"

"Well, in a way it is the fucking earthquake," Karen unnecessarily tells him, in her furious, choppy way. "Closing the fucking airport."

"Whereas, really, we were lucky," Julian continues, more or less to himself. He is tall and too thin, grayhaired. His skin, too, now looks gray: three weeks of Karen have almost done him in, he thinks. In character, she has alternated her wish to leave with a passionate desire to stay with Julian—forever. Only a day ago she had decided firmly (it seemed) to leave. And now, on the verge of her departure, an earthquake. "The airport might open in a couple of hours," Julian tells Karen, and he is thinking of Lila, the exact hour of whose return he is uncertain about. Perhaps she is already here? "Or tomorrow," he says to Karen, hopefully.

"But how would we know, with the

THE "RING" CYCLE

1
They're doing a "Ring" cycle at the Met,
Four operas in one week, for the first time
Since 1939. I went to that one.
Then war broke out, Flagstad flew home, tastes veered
To tuneful deaths and dudgeons. Next to Verdi,
Whose riddles I could whistle but not solve,
Wagner had been significance itself,
Great golden lengths of it, stitched with motifs,
A music in whose folds the mind, at twelve,
Came to its senses: Twin, Sword, Forest Bird,
Envy, Redemption Through Love . . . But left unheard
These fifty years? A fire of answered prayers
Burned round that little pitcher with big ears
Who now wakes. Night. E-flat denotes the Rhine,
Where everything began. The world's life. Mine.

2
Young love, moon-flooded hut, and the act ends.
Houselights. The matron on my left exclaims.
We gasp and kiss. Our mothers were best friends.
Now, old as mothers, here we sit. Too weird.
That man across the aisle, with lamb's-wool beard,
Was once my classmate, or a year behind me.
Alone, in black, in front of him, Maxine. . . .
It's like the "Our Town" cemetery scene!
We have long evenings to absorb together
Before the world ends: once familiar faces
Transfigured by hi-tech rainbow and mist,
Fireball and thunderhead. Make-believe weather
Calling no less for prudence. At our stage,
When recognition strikes, who can afford
The strain it places on the old switchboard?

3
Fricka looks pleased with her new hairdresser.
Brünnhilde (Behrens) has abandoned hers.
Russet-maned, eager for battle, she butts her father
Like a playful pony. They've all grown, these powers,
So young, so human. So exploitable.
The very industries whose "major funding"
Underwrote the production continue to plunder
The planet's wealth. Erda, her cobwebs beaded
With years of seeping waste, subsides unheeded
—Right, Mr. President? Right, Texaco?—
Into a gas-blue cleft. Singers retire,
Yes, but take pupils. Not these powers, no, no.
What corporation Wotan, trained by them,
Returns gold to the disaffected river,
Or preatomic sanctity to fire?

• •

phone out?" Karen complains. "It might be a couple of weeks." She is visibly at the end of her rope, which is short at the best of times. "A couple of weeks with no lights or electricity!"

It is clear to Julian that whatever controls Karen has managed to place on herself for the course of her stay are now wavering, if not completely gone. She has not behaved badly; she has not, that is, got drunk. He himself, at this moment, acutely longs for a drink. An odd longing: Julian is generally abstemious, a tennis player, always in shape. And he wonders, is he catching Karen's own longing, her alcoholic impulse? Karen, opposing A.A. (she did not like it there), believes that alcoholics can cut down, citing herself as an example—every night she has one, and only one, vodka Martini.

Karen is very beautiful, still. All that booze has in no way afflicted the fine white skin. Her face shows no tracks of pain, nor shadows. Her wide, dark-blue eyes are clear; looking into those eyes, one might imagine that her head resounds only with Mozart, or Brahms—and perhaps in a way it still does.

"Well, come on, Julian, let's find some candles. You know perfectly well that this is the cocktail hour," she says to her former husband, and she laughs.

DOWN on the ground in Toronto, disembarked, all the passengers from the flight to San Francisco are herded into a room where, they are assured, they will be given instructions. And in that large, bare room rumors quickly begin to circulate, as people gather and mutter questions to each other.

No one is sitting or standing alone, Lila notices, although surely there were other solitary travellers on that plane. And she finds that she, too, begins to attach herself to groups, one after another. Is she seeking information, or simple creature comfort, animal reassurance? She is not sure.

Three businessmen in overcoats, with lavish attaché cases, having spoken to the pilot, inform Lila that it may be several days before the San Francisco airport opens. And that the reason for not going on to L.A., or even to Reno or Salt Lake City, has to do with flight regulations—since theirs was a Canadian carrier, they had to return to Canada.

In an automatic way she looks across to the man in the trenchcoat, at the same time wondering why: why has she more or less chosen him to lead her? She very much doubts that it is because he is almost handsome, and she hopes that it is not simply that he is a man. He looks decisive, she more or less concludes, and then is shaken by a powerful memory of Julian, who is neither handsome nor decisive, and whom she has loved for all those years.

The trenchcoated man seems indeed to have a definite group of his own, of which he is in charge. Lila reads this from the postures of the four people whom she now approaches, leaving the didactic businessmen. But before Lila can ask anything the loudspeaker comes on, and a voice says that they are all to be housed in the Toronto Hilton, which is very near, and that the airline will do everything possible to get them to their destination tomorrow. A van will pick them up downstairs to take them to the hotel. Names will be called, vouchers given.

Lila has barely joined her chosen group when she hears her name called; they must be doing it by rows, she decides. She is instructed to go through a hall and down some stairs, go outside, and meet the Hilton van there.

4
Brünnhilde confronts Siegfried. That is to say,
Two singers have been patiently rehearsed
So that their tones and attitudes convey
Outrage and injured innocence. But first
Two youngsters became singers, strove to master
Every nuance of innocence and outrage
Even in the bosom of their stolid
Middle-class families who made it possible
To study voice, and languages, take lessons
In how the woman loves, the hero dies. . . .
Tonight again, each note a blade reforged,
The dire oath ready in their blood is sworn.
Two world-class egos, painted, overweight,
Who'll joke at supper side by side, now hate
So plausibly that one old stagehand cries.

5
I've worn my rings—all three of them
At once for the first time—to the "Ring."

Like pearls in seawater they gleam,
A facet sparkles through waves of sound.

Of their three givers one is underground,
One far off, one here listening.

One ring is gold; one silver, set
With two small diamonds; the third, bone
—Conch shell, rather. Ocean cradled it

As Earth did the gems and metals. All unknown,
Then, were the sweatshops of Nibelheim

That worry Nature into jewelry,
Orbits of power, Love's over me,

Or music's, as his own chromatic scales
Beset the dragon, over Time.

6
Back when the old house was being levelled
And this one built, I made a contribution.
Accordingly, a seat that bears my name
Year after year between its thin, squared shoulders
(Where Hagen is about to aim his spear)
Bides its time in instrumental gloom.
These evenings we're safe. Our seats belong
To Walter J. and Ortrud Fogelsong
—Whoever they are, or were. But late one night
(How is it possible? I'm sound asleep!)
I stumble on "my" darkened place. The plaque
Gives off that phosphorescent sheen of Earth's
Address book. Stranger yet, as I sink back,
The youth behind me, wonder in his eyes—
A son till now undreamed of—makes to rise.

—James Merrill

• •

And after a couple of wrong turns Lila indeed finds herself outside in the semidark, next to a dimly lit, low-ceilinged traffic tunnel, where a van soon does arrive. But it is for the Ramada Inn, not the Hilton.

And that is the last vehicle of any nature to show up for the next ten or twelve minutes, during which time no people show up, either. No one.

Several taxis are parked some yards down from where Lila has been standing, pacing, in her boots, by her carry-on bag. Drivers are lounging on the seats inside. Should she take a cab to the Hilton? On the other hand, maybe by now everything has been changed, and no one is going to the Hilton after all.

It is very cold, standing there in the dark tunnel, and seemingly darker and dingier all the time. Across the black, wide car lanes are some glassed-in offices, closed and black, reflecting nothing. Behind Lila is the last room through which she came. It is still lit, and empty.

Something clearly is wrong; things cannot be going as planned. Or, she is in the wrong place. Then, dimly, at the end of the tunnel, she sees a van moving toward her. It will not be a Hilton van, she thinks, and she is right: "Holiday Inn," its sign reads. It passes her slowly, an empty van, its driver barely looking out.

Lila is later to think of this period of time as the worst of the earthquake for her—a time in which she feels most utterly alone, quite possibly abandoned. It is so bad that she has forgotten about the earthquake itself almost entirely; she is too immediately frightened and uncomfortable to think of distant disaster.

After perhaps another five minutes, during which everything gets worse—the cold and the darkness, Lila's anxiety and her growing hunger—she hears voices from the room behind her. Turning, she sees what she thinks of as her group: the trenchcoated man and his charges, followed by the other passengers, all coming out to where Lila stands, shifting her feet in boots that no longer seem to fit.

As though they were old friends, Lila hurries toward him. "Where've you been? What happened?"

"Bureaucratic foul-up," he tells her. "Some stuff about whether or not the airline would spring for the hotel. Who cares? And some confusion about whose flights originated in Toronto." With a semismile he adds, "You were really lucky to get out first."

"Was I? I don't know."

"Anyway. Look, there's our van. Toronto Hilton."

IN the candlelit kitchen of Julian's house, Julian and Karen are drinking vodka and orange juice, Karen's idea being that they have to use up the orange juice before it goes to waste in the powerless refrigerator. "Besides, the C makes it good for you." She laughs, and Julian hears a sad echo of her old flirtatiousness, as she adds, "But why am I telling a doctor anything like that?"

He sighs. "Yes, I am a doctor."

This is not a room designed for such romantic illumination. The shadows on the giant steel refrigerator are severe, menacing, and the flickering candlelight on the black-tiled floor looks evil—they could be in jail. Julian feels nothing of the vodka, and Karen's face, across the round, white, high-gloss table, shows mostly fatigue. She looks vague, distracted.

In a sober, conversational voice she remarks, "Funny to think back to old times in this kitchen. With Lila and old Garrett." Garrett: Lila's former husband, a mean and sombre lawyer.

"This kitchen?" asks Julian. "I don't remember . . ."

"Sure you do. We were all drinking champagne, and later I broke a glass."

"I think it's Lila's kitchen we were in." The whole scene has indeed come back to Julian, a flash, immobilized: the other kitchen, so unlike this one, all soft wood, some copper bowls, blue pillows on a bench. Prim, pale Garrett—and Lila, her gray hair bright, brushed upward. Lila laughing and talking, he (Julian) talking, each of them, as always, excited by the other's sheer proximity. "It was somebody's birthday," he tells Karen, knowing perfectly well that it was Lila's. "You had on a green dress."

"Well, you sure do have a great memory for details."

"I have to, it's my job." And you always broke glasses, he does not say.

"You mean, my green dress is what you might call a professional memory? Holy shit, Julian, holy shit, you're, you're . . ." She begins to cough, unable to tell Julian what he is. He gets up and moves to pat her back, but Karen gestures him away.

"Don't, I'm O.K., don't hit me!" She laughs a little hysterically, as Julian, too late, realizes that she is getting drunk. Is drunk. "You know what the earthquake was like for me?" She is looking blearily across at him, tears pooled in those great, dark-blue eyes. "*Fun.* The most fun in the world. I loved it."

"Good, Karen, I'm glad." It no longer matters what he says, Julian knows, as long as it is fairly neutral. "I thought it was more like turbulence in an airplane," he mutters, more or less to himself.

At which Karen giggles. "I like turbulence," she tells him. "Remember? I think it's a kick." And then, quite suddenly, she bursts into tears. "Julian, I've never loved anyone but you," she sobs, reaching out to him. Blindly.

DESCENDING from the van at the Toronto Hilton, Lila and her new friends see that the lobby inside is very crowded. Everyone is gathered around a single small television screen, and in a room beyond there is a coffee shop, apparently open. "Hundreds killed," the announcer is saying. "Devastation."

"The restaurant's out of food," someone says.

There is a line at the reception desk, but it seems to move quickly; within minutes Lila is being assigned a room. "I wonder about phoning," she says to the man in the trenchcoat, Mark. They have all introduced themselves.

Lila's room, at the top of the Toronto Hilton, is actually a small suite, to which she pays no attention, as she heads for the phone. Without considering consequences (Karen could easily answer), she dials the familiar Mill Valley number. Dialling directly, not bothering with credit cards or operators, she gets at first a busy signal and then an operator saying that she is sorry, all the circuits are busy. Lila dials again, gets more operators who are sorry, more busy signals. She goes into the bathroom to wash up, comes back and dials the number again, and again. She orders a sandwich from room service, and continues to try to phone.

A COUPLE of hours later, in Mill Valley, Julian awakes with a sudden jolt: he is in his kitchen, still, and every brilliant light in the room is on, as is the television. Bottles and sticky glasses on the table. Gradually he remembers carrying Karen into the guest room. She was light enough in his arms, but a total deadweight; his back feels strained. And then he came back into this room. Surely not, he hopes, for another drink?

The TV screen shows a very large, white apartment building that has buckled and is rent with cracks and gaps. A background of black night sky, and a cordon of police. Cars, flashing lights. Dazed people standing around in clumps. Julian gets up to turn it off when, at that moment, the phone rings. In his confusion, he stumbles, just catches it on the third ring.

"Lila? My darling, my Lila, wherever . . . ? We're here, I mean I'm here, no damage, really. Well, I imagine I do sound odd, but no, of course I'm not drunk. Karen was just on the point of leaving—actually packed, then the damn thing hit. I guess she'll go tomorrow; by now I suppose I mean today. And you? You'll be back today! For sure?"

SMILING, still breathing hard with the effort of so much futile dialling before at last getting through, Lila offers a silent prayer to all those on her curious private list: she prays that she can fly out of Toronto tomorrow, or whatever day this now is—

and that Karen can fly, finally, out of San Francisco.

She sleeps fitfully and wakes early, knowing that she is awake for good. She thinks of telephoning Julian again, but does not. She showers and dresses as hurriedly as possible, and goes down to the hotel lobby.

There people are sitting around, or milling about, aimlessly. The TV seems still to be showing the news from the night before; Lila glimpses the same bridge shots, fire shots, the broken apartment house. All around her in the lobby the faces are pale, clothes a little dishevelled, as hers must be. From a small, plump woman who is sitting near the front desk she hears, "They say we're getting out today, but I don't believe it."

Lila, too, has trouble believing that they will escape. As she looks around at the tired clusters of people—no one, she observes again, is going it alone—she imagines that they will be there for months, that they are in fact refugees from some much larger disaster.

In the coffee shop, she finds Mark, and another man, and joins them. Mark got through to his wife, in Saratoga, who said that their chimney had fallen off, and that everything in the house that could break was broken. "But she's O.K.," says Mark, with a grin. "And the kids. You should have seen the waves in the swimming pool, she told me. You wouldn't believe it. Tidal."

From the lobby then, at first indistinctly, they hear an announcement: ". . . vans will begin to leave this hotel at nine-forty-five. Repeat: the San Francisco airport is clear."

LILA's seat on the morning plane is not nearly as good as the one the day before. Pushing her way down the aisle with her carryon, she takes note of this fact, though today it seems extremely unimportant. And she does have a window seat.

Everyone on the plane is in a festive mood. People smile a lot, though many faces show considerable fatigue, the ravages of a long and anxious night. But an almost manic mood prevails: the airport is clear, we're going home, the city has more or less survived. To all of which Lila adds to herself, and Karen is going back East, probably.

Everyone is seated, buckled in. The pilot's voice is telling the flight attendants to prepare for departure. The engines start their roar; they roar and roar. And nothing happens.

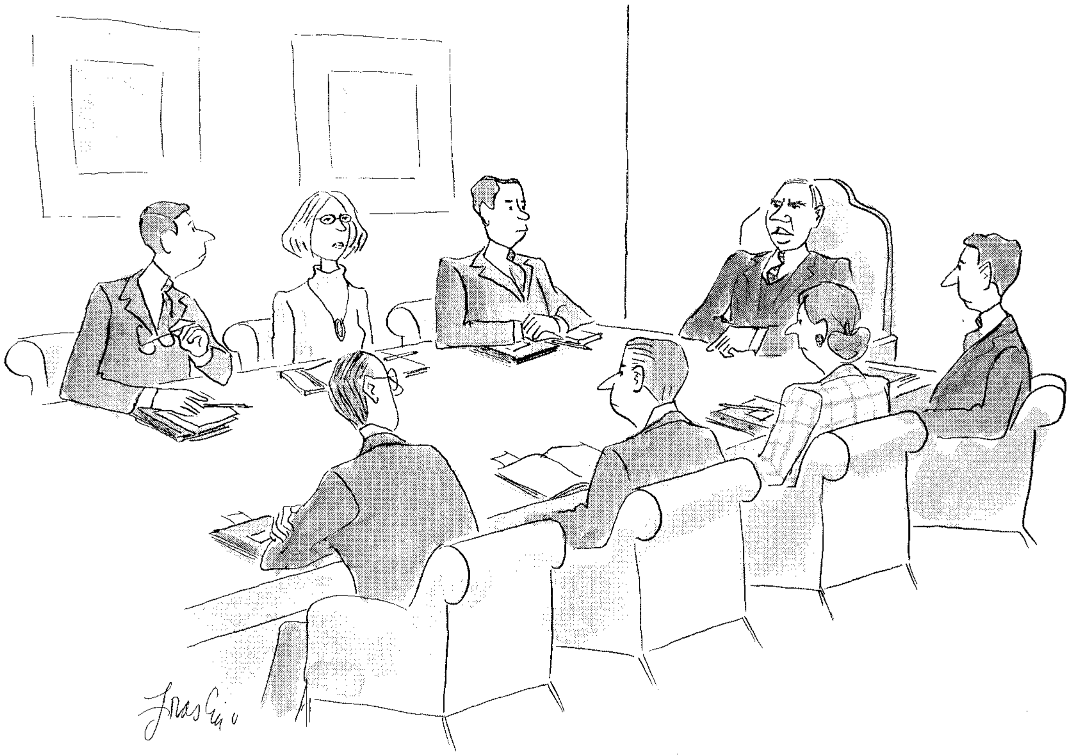
This goes on for some time—ten minutes, fifteen—until the engines are turned off, and they are simply sitting there on the runway, in the October Canadian sunlight. But the atmosphere on the plane is less impatient than might be imagined; it is felt that at least they are on their way. There may even be a certain (unacknowledged, unconscious) relief at the delay: San Francisco and whatever lies ahead do not have to be faced quite so soon.

The pilot announces a small mechanical glitch, which will be taken care of right away. And, perhaps twenty minutes later, the engines start again. And they are off, almost: the plane starts down the runway, gathering speed, and then, quite suddenly, it slows, and stops.

Jesus Christ. Now really. What now? We'll never. What in hell is going on? These sentiments echo around the cabin, where patience has worn audibly thin, until, apparently starting at the front row, where a smiling stewardess is standing, the rumor spreads: a dog has somehow got loose on the field; it will be a minute more. They have already been cleared for takeoff.

And then, with a motion that seems to be decisive, the plane moves forward, again. Glancing from her window, quite suddenly Lila sees—indeed!—a dog, running in the opposite direction, running back to Toronto. A large, lean, yellowish dog, whose gallop is purposeful, determined. He will get back to his place, but in the meantime he enjoys the run, the freedom of the forbidden field. His long nose swings up and down, his tail streams backward, a pennant, as Lila—watching from her window, headed at last back to San Francisco (probably)—begins in a quiet, controlled, and private way to laugh. "It was just so funny," she will say to Julian, later. "The final thing, that dog. And he looked so proud! As though instead of getting in our way he had come to our rescue."

—ALICE ADAMS



"It has come to my attention that someone here at management level has given a sucker an even break."

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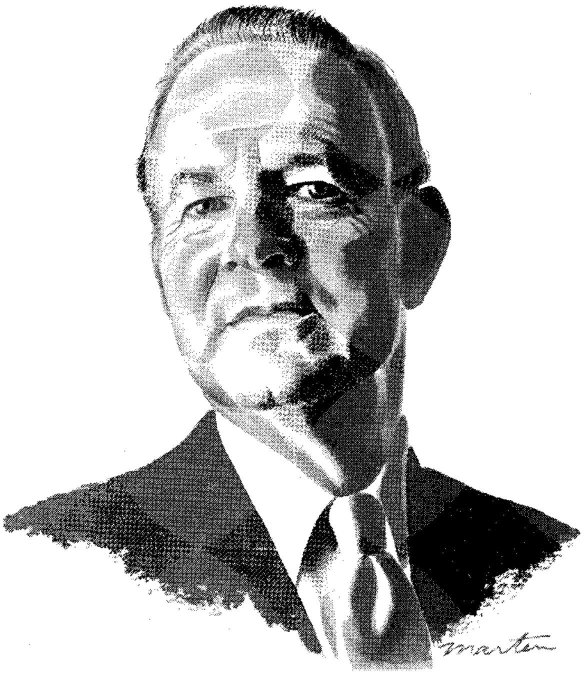
PROFILES

THE TACTICIAN



A POLITICAL genius unencumbered by creed or convictions is the gist of what peers and diplomats say about James Addison Baker III, who besides being Secretary of State, they add, is President George Bush's friend, possibly his closest, and yet at some level his rival, too. This thumbnail critique stands up fairly well to close examination. "Genius" is too strong a word, but even by Washington's exacting standards Baker's political gift is seen on all sides as remarkable. And if convictions are equated with set views or strong preferences Baker doesn't have them. He is concerned with results, not ideas or causes. "I'm more interested in the game than in philosophy," he has said. Still, a man of exceptional ability—and Baker is one—isn't likely to serve in the job that Baker now holds, especially in a time of sweeping change, and not be influenced by the issues he is dealing with. Baker *may* acquire views, or attitudes, but he won't take a position until he has rigorously assayed its likely effects on opinion within Congress and beyond. In a city that includes pragmatism among the graces, many experienced people who have worked with Baker or have observed him closely cite him as the most pragmatic figure they've known. Other superlatives follow: "most disciplined," "hardest-working," "best listener," and—a constant—"best tactician."

Curiously, Baker's track record in elective politics places him on more losing sides than winning ones. He drifted into the arena almost by chance—helping out in George Bush's losing campaign for the Senate, in 1970. In 1976, to everyone's surprise, Baker emerged as the manager of Gerald Ford's uphill struggle to remain in the White House; although Ford lost, too, the Baker-run campaign was widely judged to have allowed him to come from very far behind and almost beat his challenger, Jimmy Carter. In 1978, Baker tried being a candidate himself: he ran for the office of attorney general of Texas. He lost. Two years later, he was on the winning side as a member of Ronald Reagan's campaign organization; and in 1988, of course, he directed the Bush campaign.

Baker is an original. He got into politics late—at the age of forty—in Texas, a place where most political careers start early. But he made his mark in Washington, not in Texas, moving at an astonishing clip to build perhaps the most impressive résumé of any public figure of the postwar era. As chief of staff in Ronald Reagan's first term, Baker ran the best White House operation in modern memory, and in those four years—from 1981 through 1984—he had more to do with managing the country's business than anyone else. More often than not, he was also a steadying and moderating influence. For the next three and a half years, he was the Secretary of the Treasury, a time in which his department was at least as innovative as at any time since the late nineteen-sixties. The day after being elected President, George Bush appointed Baker to the job he wanted—Secretary of State. Aside from the exposure to trade policy and exchange-rate issues that any Treasury Secretary acquires, Baker brought little direct experience to his new portfolio, and his knowledge of the world that lay beyond the sovereign writ of his friend George Bush was limited. However, Bush could be sure that Baker would not be State's man in the Administration but, rather, the White House's man at State. And, of course, Baker's surpassing political skills would remain at Bush's service.

Fully understanding either Baker or Bush may not be possible; each is a somewhat enigmatic figure—Baker especially—and so is the relationship between them, which is crucial to both. It sets them apart from past Oval Office–seventh-floor tandems. For a President and his first minister to be old and intimate friends is probably without precedent; even for a Presidential candidate and his campaign manager to have such a relationship is extraordinary. Equally so is the role reversal that struck many as being under way when Bush and his entourage arrived in power. A President is usually the best politician in his Cabinet, and he isn't expected to be familiar with the diplomatic method or the finer points of foreign policy. These are supposed to lie within the competence of his Secretary of State, who, as custodian of traditional foreign-policy interests, competes with other constituencies for the President's ear. Bush, however, is reputed to be familiar with the nuances of foreign policy, and he clearly loves the subject, but he isn't as clever or astute a politician as Baker, who hasn't yet been elected to public office.

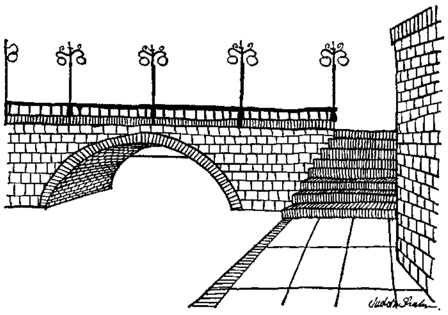
The relationship is full of ironies and, inevitably, some tension. Baker is in politics because Bush brought him in, from the tedium of business and corporate law. Bush is President because over a period of years Baker thought about and worked through the problems of getting him there. Indeed, if it weren't for Baker's astuteness it's not likely that Ronald Reagan would have made Bush the Vice-Presidential candidate in 1980. Bush had been everywhere, and had one of the best résumés in town. But Baker's was to become far better, because Bush, though he accumulated some notable titles, had never had one of the key jobs before becoming President, and he had always been on someone's short leash, whether Richard Nixon's or Henry Kissinger's or Ronald Reagan's. Baker has, of course, managed center-stage operations, and in his White House years he kept Vice-President Bush in the loop, never losing sight of his friend's exalted goal. Then, in 1988, Baker took over Bush's seemingly directionless Presidential campaign, with prodigious results. According to some people who know them both well, Baker reckons that he has done most of the heavy lifting, whereas it is his friend who got first prize. And almost everyone who knows them well thinks that Baker, having accomplished what he has accomplished, is confident that he could run the Oval Office as well as or better than anyone he has met, and so will eventually try returning to the White House on his own. In fact, back in the 1986-87 period some of his party's heavy hitters approached Baker about running for President himself. Bush, they felt, was either weak or thought of as weak; the "wimp factor" was seen as a potential problem. Bush was obviously aware of those overtures to his friend and counsellor.

The role reversal isn't complete. Bush, it's true, has for years been on close terms with many world figures, and he does work the phones with them a lot—far more than past Presidents have done. He is also undeniably comfortable with a range of foreign-policy issues. But his grasp of the arcana of foreign policy can be—and has been—exaggerated. As for Baker, he, like many skilled lawyers, masters a brief very quickly. "He is action-oriented—more so than Bush," says a senior Administration official who works closely with Baker. "He is decisive, and no one second-guesses his sense of timing. Neither Bush nor Baker reads history."

It's unlikely that Baker has ever worried much about his friend's greater knowledge of the big world; one portfolio isn't very different from another if you are Jim Baker, who plays to two constituencies—Congress and the press—whether he is running State or Treasury. "Bush might override Baker on a foreign-policy issue, but I seriously doubt he'd do so on a political issue," says Robert Strauss, another Texan and another of Washington's notable *têtes politiques*, who over the years has functioned as a guru for the Democratic Party. I asked Strauss if Baker was Bush's political guru. "No question about it," he said, adding that Baker, whom he knows well, "is as fine a tactical brain as any I've known and also a first-rate political strategist."

State has rarely had a Secretary with a sharp sense of political direction. Harry Truman's first choice for the job was James F. Byrnes, a colleague from his Senate days; in most ways, Byrnes was not a success, but he did help Truman defend his congressional flank. Byrnes' successor, General George C. Marshall, and his deputy, Robert A. Lovett, had a better feel for accommodating foreign policy to domestic pressures than any in a long line of successors before Baker, but Truman's foreign policy rarely drew a good press. Henry Kissinger had few peers in the art of fine-tuning press coverage—he made household names of a few otherwise anonymous television reporters—but he didn't do well with Congress; he never really understood it. Baker is unusual in being a senior foreign-policy official who is a virtuoso performer on Capitol Hill *and* in managing the press.

Bush and Baker have, of course, coincided with the most tumultuous and profound change in the world order in half a century. In the forties, a handful of people in Washington were trying to think through the implications of what was occurring and what kinds of novel institutions and structures might be required. No such conceptualizing is under way now. Bush has no interest in conceptual thinking, and Baker, as he says himself, doesn't think conceptually. He belongs to a recognizable type—the lawyer-achiever who doesn't look very far ahead but relies on an aide, or aides, to do that, and on his own instincts to fit to domestic political tolerances whatever plan or design may develop. At State, however, Baker's licensed planners belong to his inner sanctum, and they have had a large involvement in operations.



Thus far, the Bush-Baker performance in foreign policy has created doubt about whether their brand of leadership will allow America to play the role that only it can play in accommodating change and fashioning a new and stable world order. Bush's approach to most issues is purely reactive, and Baker is the ideal agent for him. As a team, they are normally unwilling to take a step before satisfying themselves that all bases are covered and the short-term political effects appear favorable. "This Administration's dominant concern is not what happens three or five years out but five days out," says a senior American diplomat who has had considerable exposure to the current leadership. Another says, "After working closely with Baker, I don't know how he thinks. What I see is his flawless instinct for how an issue will go and for being on the right side of it. What he does or says about United States–Soviet relations, for example, doesn't seem to reflect analysis or deep thought or strategy. He is like a diamond cutter in Antwerp who can hit the rock once and all the facets will break as they should, with no damage to the stone. If we at State wrote a job description of what a Secretary of State should be, he would be very like Baker: lots of political savvy and a strong relationship with the President; large intellectual capacity and plenty of energy; no hangups or neuroses or ego problems. Only one thing is missing—an interest in policy."

In Washington, business-as-usual is hardly a novel approach to issues of national security. But the question is whether such an approach can work now, in so volatile and exigent a world environment. For Baker and his people, the events of 1989 were merely events, according to senior people at State. "They don't distinguish between large and small ones," one of them says. "Problems they do distinguish—between the hard ones and the easy ones."

The Bush policy would be "mainstream—unimaginative, perhaps, but mainstream," Brent Scowcroft, Bush's national-security adviser, noted not long after the election. Bush has appeared to equate inaction with virtue, insisting in interviews that he is "cautious" and "prudent" and "diplomatic." The extreme caution is a hobble. A few diplomats told me that the Administration vetoed planning for the contingency of German unification for fear of leaks. A senior official confirmed the truth of those statements. Baker is not less cautious, but he is less visibly so. And it isn't as if his caution were designed to complement Bush's. He is just very cautious—"the most cautious human being I've ever met," says Michael Deaver, a friend and admirer of Baker and his greatest ally when both served in the Reagan White House.

Cautious is obviously better than incautious (if that is the alternative). And the Bush-Baker extreme caution is seen by some diplomats and their governments—allied and adversarial—as being at times a large plus. In the early going, Europeans were dismayed by the new Administration's reluctance to see as an opportunity—as suiting Western interests—what Gorbachev was doing and was causing to happen. But those same Europeans were heartened and reassured by the caution that Bush and Baker showed this past autumn as East Europeans buried repressive regimes and turned their politics upside down. Gorbachev, fearful of an overreaction in Washington and, in turn, elsewhere, sent Bush a stiff message during that evening last November when the East German tide was breaching the odious wall; it urged restraint on Bush and, through him, on Bonn. Gorbachev need not have worried—not about Bush and Baker. And therein lie the strength of their approach in some volatile situations and its weakness in others.

On some issues, Baker has relatively little influence. China policy, for which Bush feels equipped with special knowledge and insights, is an example —although it is an issue that he has mishandled from the start. In East-West matters generally, Baker is less tightly tied to the past than Bush and Scowcroft, who have been slow to unlearn the thinking of the mid-nineteen-seventies. Lacking their perspective, Baker isn't victimized by it. Thus, he reacted some time before they did to the opportunity Gorbachev was presenting and to the apparent need to "help" *perestroika*. "Jim has been forward-leaning about the Soviets," one of his colleagues on the N.S.C. says. "He is action-oriented, and wants to do the things that State loves to do—make agreements, and so on."

The comment conveys a simplistic view of the Baker style. "On some issues, Bush is actually out in front of Baker," a senior diplomat says. "This is because Baker is playing to domestic political interests—doing so for Bush but also for himself."

I asked whether Baker's more timely switch to a pro-Gorbachev, pro-*perestroika* position was taken on the merits or for more tactical reasons.

"Baker's switch was no epiphany," the diplomat replied. "It reflected instead his concern about the Administration's being blamed if things went badly for Gorbachev and his new thinking." Another of State's close Baker watchers agreed, and added, "He isn't a cynic, and I do like and admire him. But he has yet to betray any sense of history."

BAKER's ascent in politics seemingly relied upon the instinctual and effortless exercise of a blend of talents: political acuity, discipline, intense preparation, and, above all, a flair for putting together winning combinations. But even prodigal talent may be unavailing without some intervention by fortune. In Baker's case, that meant being in the right place at the right time. After arriving in Washington, in 1975, as Undersecretary of Commerce, Baker moved in a year from being a new face in town to acting as Gerald Ford's campaign manager, though he had never before run anything larger than an essentially local political operation. Then, in 1980, the Reagan people unexpectedly brought him into their campaign, and in no time he had become a pivotal influence and was placed in charge of the negotiations for Reagan's debate with Carter; the event was judged a resounding success for Reagan, and two weeks later this intruder from the Bush crowd, with no credentials as a Reaganaut, found himself invited to become the new President's chief of staff. Flair is not uncommon, but to have flair and reliably good timing in politics is rare.

In Washington and in Houston, Baker's home town, there are quite different views of him; the two places are, of course, very different, and politics in the outer reaches has little in common with corporate-law practice. In both places Baker is widely admired for his skills, but comments in Washington suggest a more complex and artful figure than his peer

Victoria Roberts

"I'm just not in an Australian-movie mood, O.K.?"

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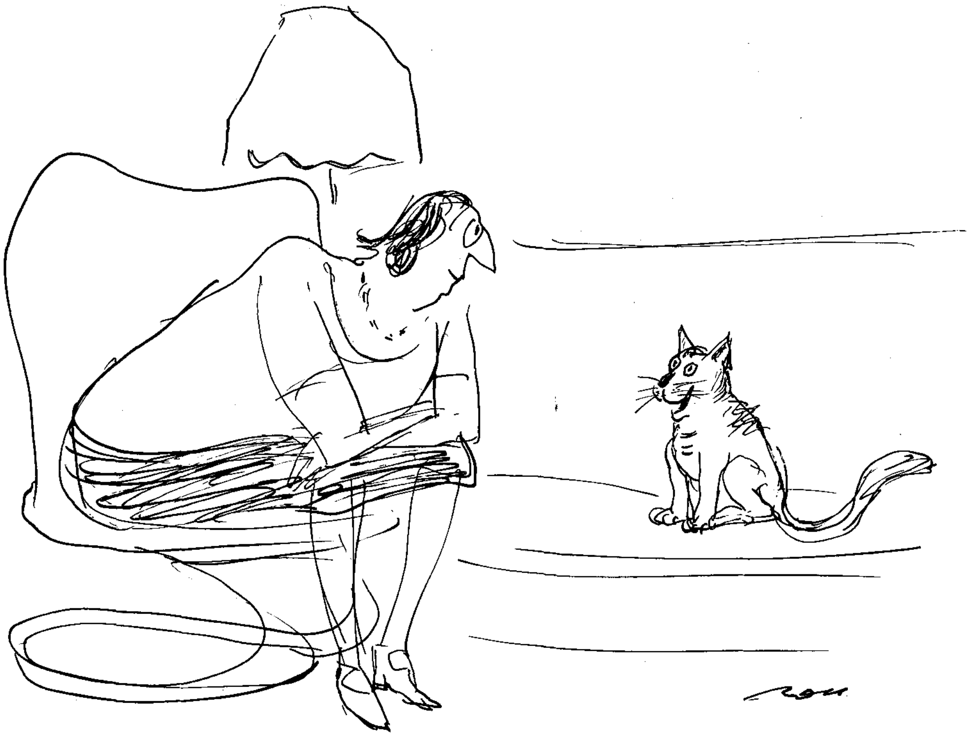
group in Houston sees. There Baker is known as a loyal, thoughtful friend to many, and as a community stalwart. His game, they know, is not poker but tennis, and for years he was the best club's best player. In Washington, he doesn't make friends, and he does his considerable best to restrict his social calendar. Besides being private, he has a closed side. Friends in Houston feel that Baker was heavily marked by the death of his first wife, in 1970; certainly the event caused something of a withdrawal. Washington sees his affable but rather insular style as basic to his political approach. In his personal style Baker reflects both an Ivy League education and Texas roots. He wears conservative, well-cut clothes and cowboy boots. He speaks in unadorned complete sentences, but colleagues from White House days and the campaign trail know that when he is provoked he summons the earthily graphic idiom of the prairie. He gave up cigarettes years ago, but in Houston he continues to chew Red Man tobacco, and he has also been observed doing so while playing golf (a game he recently took up) at the Chevy Chase Club, the Washington area's toniest. "He was chewing and spitting freely," I was told.

Washington sees Baker as unaggressive but nonetheless very tough. His friends in Houston concur; his oldest and closest friend there, a cousin named Preston Moore, once called him "the velvet hammer," and the sobriquet stuck. "He is as tough as a two-dollar steak," Moore says affectionately. Among the first things that Washington noticed about Baker was the sense he conveyed of feeling secure within himself. In a town with at least its share of poseurs and puffed-up second-raters, here was someone who, though very competitive, seemed unusually capable and also comfortable with himself and his responsibilities, however heavy they might become. There was a tendency to attribute this agreeable quality to his background—to his having a sense of being part of his home town's root system. Old money and tradition, along with his talents, have unquestionably contributed a lot to the Baker persona, but since he entered politics his friendship with Bush—and the knowledge that he can rely on it and use it to their joint advantage—has surely added to the quiet assurance he conveys.

"George grew up in a political environment and Jimmy didn't," observes the Reverend J. Thomas Bagby, Rector Emeritus of St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston, who has been for many years the close friend and minister of Bush and Baker; they both joined his church in the nineteen-sixties and became vestrymen. Bagby himself, now seventy-eight, grew up in Austin but has spent fifty-four years in Houston—in three different churches—and attended Bush and Baker closely during both men's family crises. "They are closer than brothers," he says. "And each is smart enough to listen to the other. Jimmy has street smarts. He has the instincts of Sam Rayburn and Jack Garner twice over. He has feel and touch." Bagby said he could think of nothing that "would create an actual difference" between Bush and Baker.

Perhaps. Others who know them well also see a fraternal relationship, but add that brothers can be competitive with each other and can have differences. There is rivalry between Bush and Baker, which, friends and political associates note, is not unusual between close friends. They are competitive on the tennis court and beyond. Bush, during his last summer holiday in Maine, seemed determined to present himself as the American engaged in the largest number of outdoor activities and a keen competitor into the bargain. It may not be possible to be Bush's friend without also being in some sense a competitor, or thought of as a competitor. Bush has on occasion said to Baker, and to others who have worked with him, "If you're so smart, how come I'm President" (or "running for President" or "Vice-President," depending on the era). And Bush, we know, set out on his long march toward the White House at a time when his record in elective politics was unremarkable and the path to his goal was strewn with more imposing and plausible aspirants. Isolated incidents along the way suggested that each friend needed to retain a measure of independence from the other. Bush is reported to have consulted no one—not even Baker—on his selection of Senator Dan Quayle to be his running mate. His determination to make the most important decision of the campaign wholly on his own says something about Bush. And for Baker, the campaign manager, to emphasize (in one way or another) his lack of involvement in the decision raised eyebrows nearly as high.

"I never quite understood the Bush-Baker relationship," says Mike Deaver. Craig Fuller, who was Cabinet Secretary during Reagan's first term and George Bush's chief of staff in the second term, says, "Bush and Baker are close friends, but the rela-



"I've enjoyed our little talk, and now I'll have myself a nice little nap."

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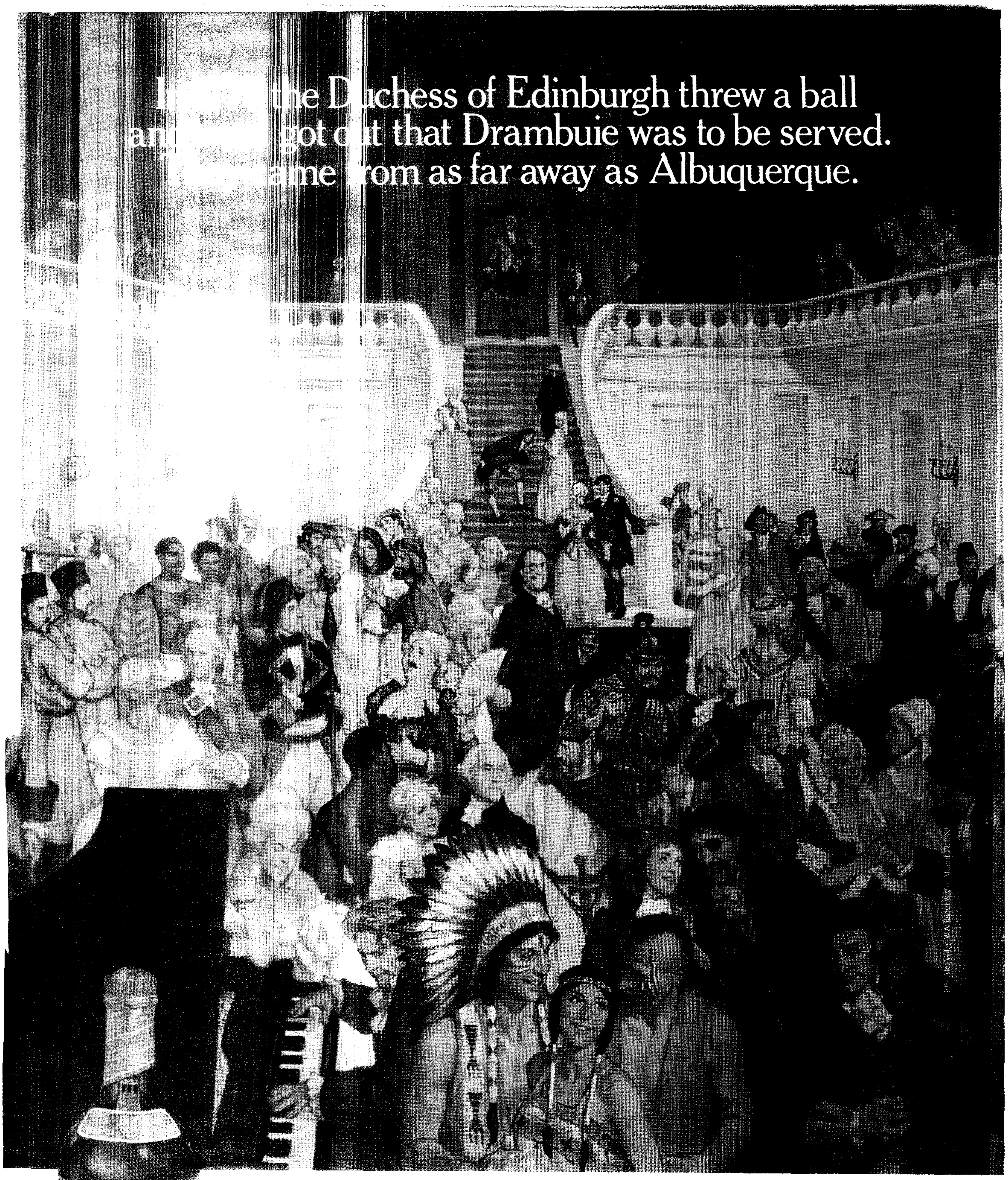

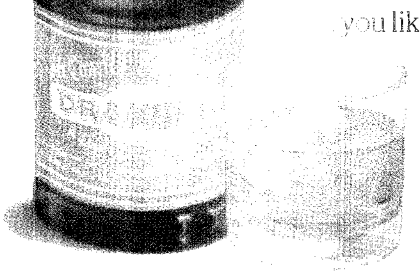

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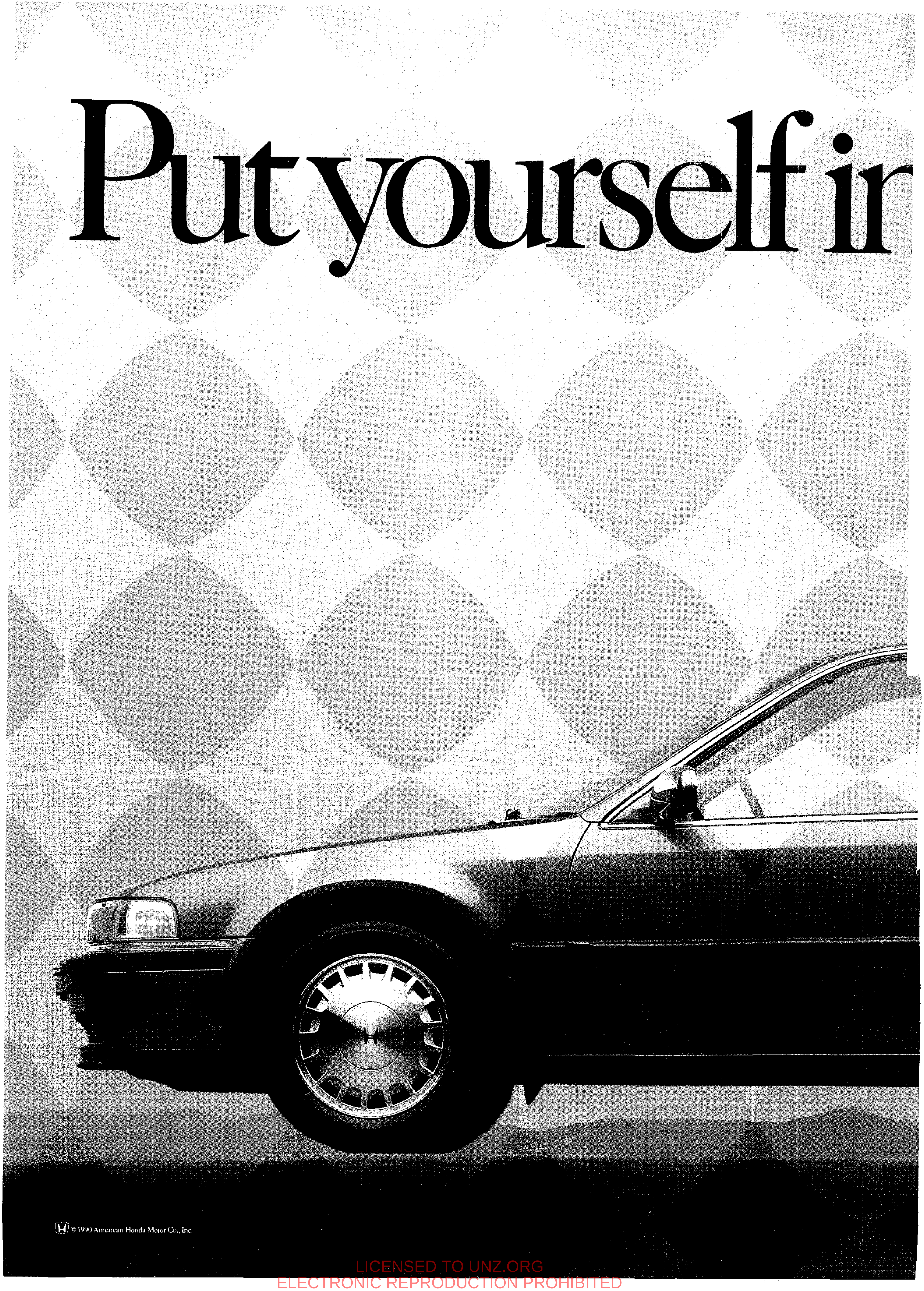
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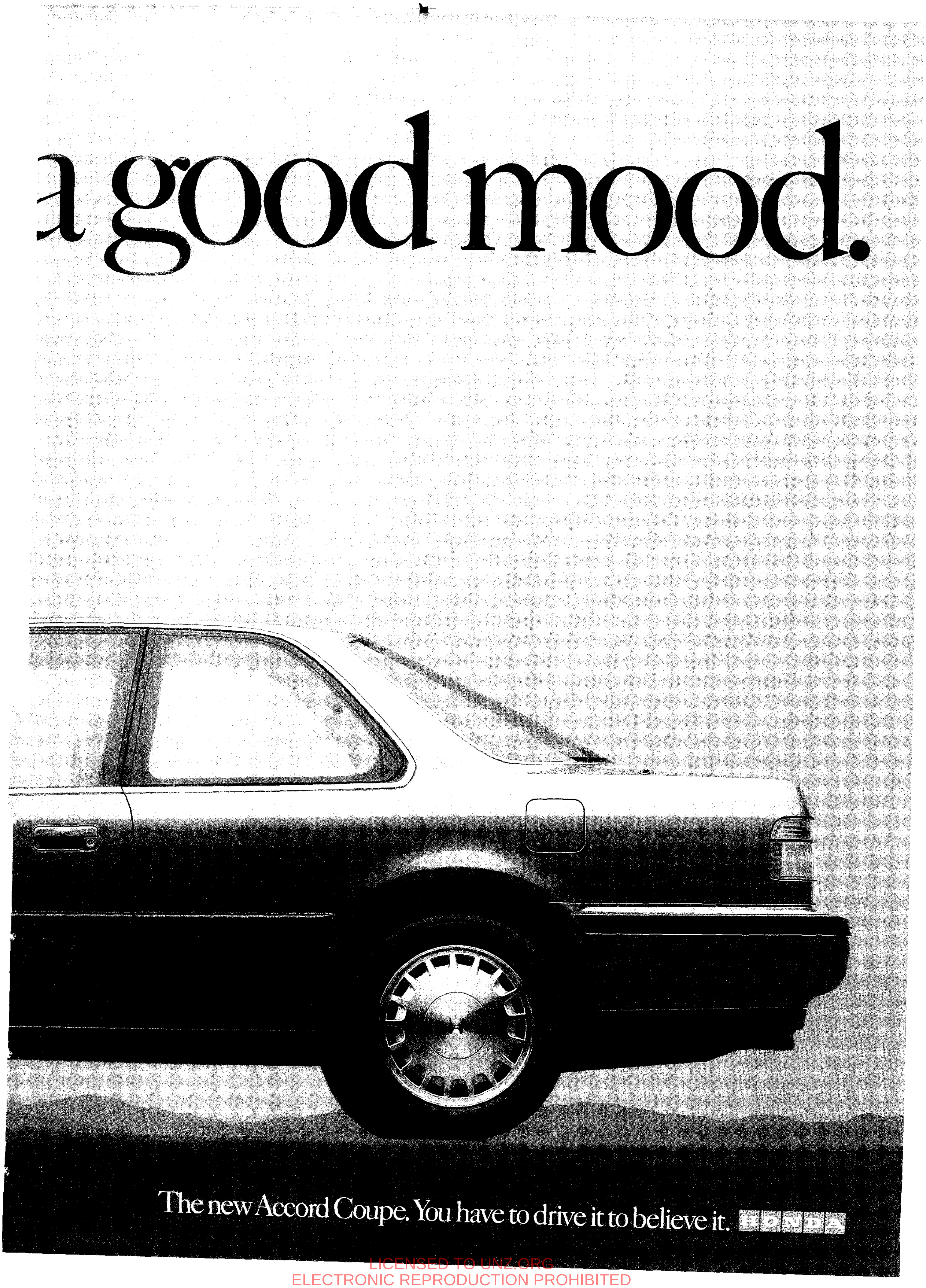
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tionship is complex. There is no small measure of competition between them, and even an element of rivalry. They pay a lot of attention to each other's press, and if one takes a hit he is kidded by the other."

Since Bush has always taken most of the hits, Baker has presumably done most of the kidding. He has always had a very good press. In fact, between the time he arrived in the White House as chief of staff and his friend's nomination for President, Baker was always able to generate a better press than Bush, whose negatives in the polls were often high—at times alarmingly so—and who was exposed to heavy shelling from various media stars. However, a President has more freedom to contrive and shape news stories than does his Secretary of State, a part of whose role is to protect the boss. But Baker "is very risk-averse," one former White House associate has said. "He is enormously concerned with what people think of him." Baker watchers, including keen admirers, note that his fingerprints are rarely visible on projects that go sour. And his instinct for avoiding the portion of blame that might otherwise fall on a key Presidential adviser at precarious moments seems undulled by this President's being a close friend *and* political partner. In contrast, John Sununu, Bush's chief of staff, who is abrasive and prone to error—unlike Baker, who is neither—takes a lot of the heat when things go wrong. That is a quality that Presidents cherish, and one that is not a part of Baker's equipment.

It seems not to matter, though. "There is a compatibility between Bush and Baker that is almost collegiate in nature," a senior diplomat says. "They are like locker-room buddies on a winning team—the quarterback and the running back. The team keeps on winning because of the way those two work together. There's a bit of swagger, and they do like ragging each other. They are very good in combination."

I asked Baker about reports that he and Bush talk on the phone off and on from early morning until as late as eleven in the evening.

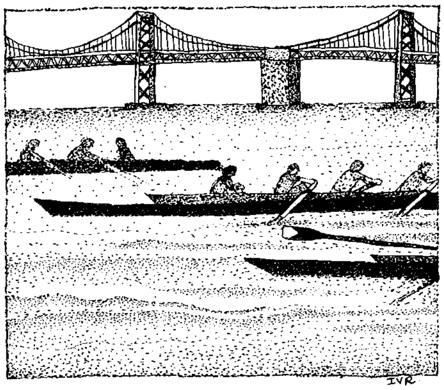
"The calls often do start early in the morning," he said. "But they don't continue that late, because we are both in bed well before then. We kid about who folds faster at parties."

John Connally, who, besides being Richard Nixon's favorite Cabinet member (and for a time his choice for Vice-President), was a political enemy of George Bush in Texas, is very high on Baker. "He can divorce himself from his job and give the President an objective analysis of an issue," Connally says. "He isn't concerned with guarding his turf or with where State Department interests may lie. Baker is the Jim Farley of this Administration without being Postmaster General. His relationship with Bush is more important to each of them than his job and the relationship of that office to Bush as President."

Baker categorically denies wanting to run for President in 1996, but no one in Washington who has worked with him or knows him takes the denial seriously; nor do most of his friends in Houston. He wants to be President, they think, because there is no place else left to go. "He is carving out a niche that has no parallel in recent decades," says Connally (who for a time seemed to be creating just such a niche for himself, and who also had close relationships with two Presidents).

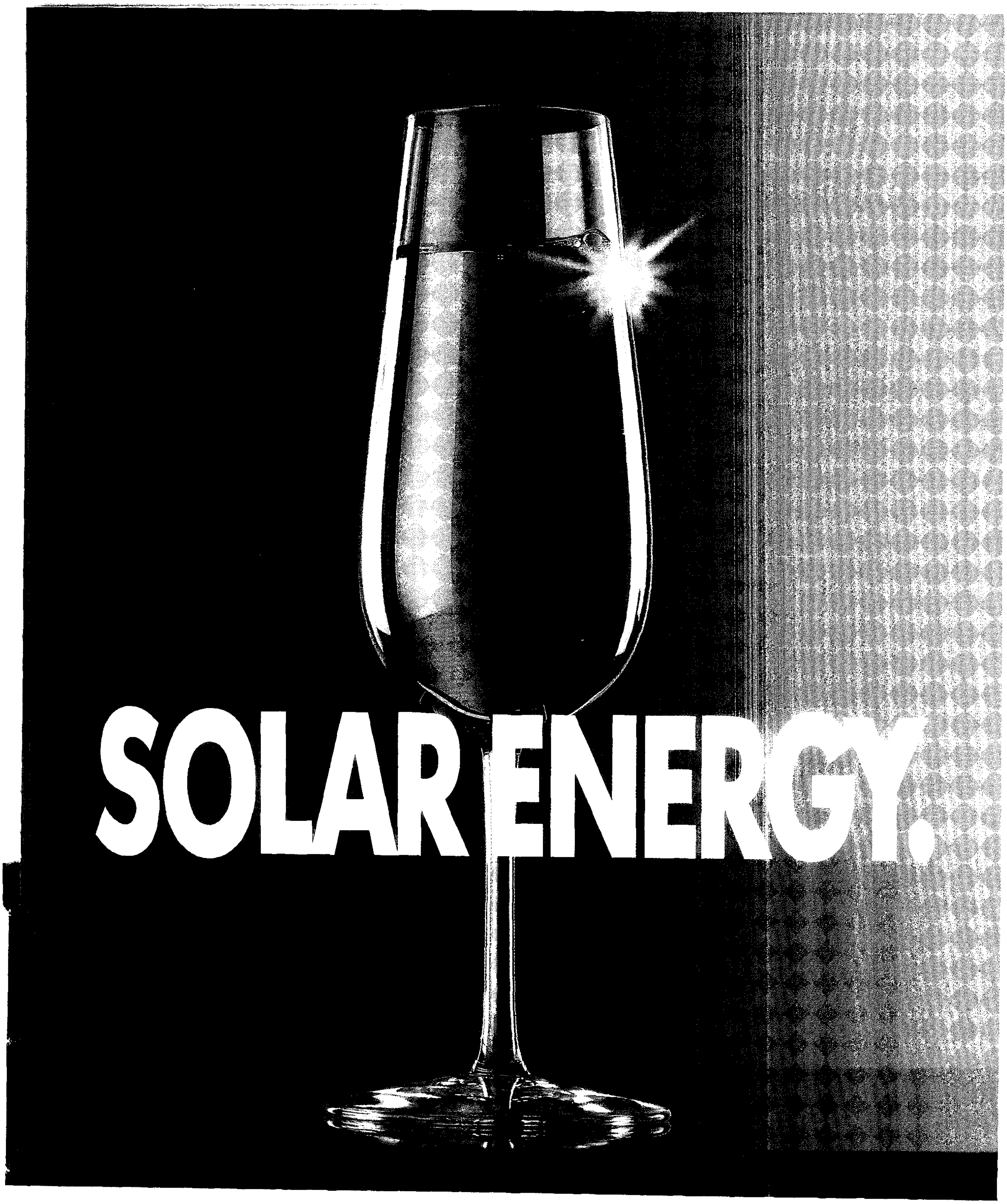
Baker has told at least one of his four sons that he has no intention of practicing law again; he told me that, too. Nor is it likely that much else in the private sector would interest him now for very long. I asked a career diplomat who has seen a good deal of him whether he thought Baker wanted to be President. "He does. He shows it by what he doesn't say, not by what he does say" was the somewhat cryptic answer.

As high achievers go, Baker seems uncomplicated. For one of his type and background, however, his life over the past twenty years or so has been highly complicated as well as memorable. No one in Washington who knows Baker would agree with his friends in Houston, most of whom like to say, "What you see is what you get."



THE first and largest part of Baker's life was unremarkable, conforming to family tradition and to what is expected of the male progeny of old money in Houston, the state's largest city and one with more than its share of the new money created by oil. Baker, who was born in 1930, went first to the obvious place, the Kinkaid School, and then to an Eastern boarding school, the Hill School, in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and to an Ivy League university, Princeton. "Old money here sends its kids East to school so they'll learn to say 'Fantastic' instead of 'Bullshit,' " says a breezy *cousine* of Baker's. "We never thought of George Bush and others like him who came here as carpetbaggers," she adds. "There is a natural affinity between Ivy Leaguers and old money."

During spring break in his second year at Princeton, Baker went to Bermuda as a member of the rugby team. There he met Mary Stuart McHenry, who was from Dayton, Ohio, and at the time was a freshman at Finch. He never really dated anyone else after that, he says. He graduated in 1952, and they were married in Dayton in November of 1953. After a two-year stint in the Marine Corps, Baker regained the true path by entering the University of Texas Law School. A gesture he made then clearly reflected the sense of tradition and the deference owed to one's father which are characteristic of the Baker clan. On being urged by his father to join Phi Delta Theta, his own fraternity, Baker did so, even though he was married, was the only non-undergraduate, and was seven years older than most of his pledge brothers. He also submitted to the ritual hazing, which is said to have included wearing a dead fish for a week. He was quoted by the writer Taylor Branch, in an article that appeared in the *Texas Monthly* in 1982, as saying, "I did it for my father. He wanted me to do it because he had done it. He believed it was the smart thing to do. If you're going to practice law in Texas, you go to the law school in Austin and make all the contacts you can. They'll pay off later." After graduating, in 1957, Baker joined Andrews Kurth, Houston's second-oldest law firm. If it had not been for an anti-nepotism rule adopted in his father's



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day, Baker would have joined the city's most notable firm, Baker & Botts, which is not only older than Andrews Kurth but also nearly as old as the city itself, having begun life in 1866 as Gray & Botts; the history of the town and the firm are intertwined. Peter Gray had been a captain in the Texas Army, fought against the Mexican invasion in 1842, and represented Houston in the first state legislature. Colonel Walter Browne Botts, a transplanted Virginian, had a brother who represented John Brown and a kinsman who defended Aaron Burr. The firm's first Baker was a state judge, who joined it in 1872. His son Captain James Baker joined the firm on July 1, 1887, and for a time thereafter the name was Baker, Botts & Baker. Those Bakers and the eldest sons of future Bakers were all named James Addison. Captain Baker's son was called Jim. His famous son James A. Baker III is called Jimmy by family and friends and is referred to by that name in Houston's smart set; the oldest of his four sons is called Jamie, and he is now married, with two daughters, and a member of the Baker & Botts Washington office.

Captain Baker, who died in 1941, at eighty-four, is a family member worth pausing over, partly because he is the one who is said to have been most like his grandson. He, too, was a mover and shaker, having been for nearly forty years Houston's dominant figure, rivalled in authority only by Jesse Jones, an influential figure in Washington during the nineteen-thirties and early forties; Jones put up a procession of buildings in Houston, Fort Worth, and New York, and was also a political kingmaker in Houston. Politics there was sorted out and decisions were made in the Lamar Hotel (Room 8-F, Baker says), which was owned by Jones, and which no longer exists. The Bakers were Southern Puritans and thought of themselves as being above politics. Captain Baker's admonition to young lawyers—"Work hard, study hard, and stay out of politics"—was and remains a basic text in the Baker household. Things weren't quite that simple, however. "Captain Baker ran the firm, and he ran the city," one of Baker & Botts' senior partners says. And Baker says now, "Grandfather was a behind-the-scenes player."

Captain Baker's son Jim, after an obligatory passage through the Hill School, Princeton, and the University of Texas Law School, earned in the trenches of the First World War the highest distinction he would ever have. He returned to Houston an authentic and highly decorated hero. He, too, was a captain, the difference being that his father's title was an honorific. But James A. Baker, Jr., never acquired the nimbus of authority and prowess that were the natural portion of his father and his son. By family standards, he must be seen as a lesser figure, pinched between two high fliers. As it turned out, his major impact on Baker & Botts was the result of the anti-nepotism rule: it denied the firm the additional prestige, not to mention legal business, that his son's involvement would have generated.

Jim Baker and his wife, the former Bonner Means, of Houston, were childless for thirteen years, and then had a son and a daughter in swift succession. As a father, Jim was no less a disciplinarian than Captain Baker had been, and was called the Warden by kids who frequented the house. I asked his son whether it was true, as I had read, that his father would douse him with a pitcher of cold water if he failed to rise promptly in the morning. "Yes," he said. "If I wasn't up by the second call, I'd get the cold water. He took cold baths and showers. Once, he took me on a camping-hunting trip in Wyoming, and I remember that in the early mornings he would break the ice in the creek and jump in. I couldn't relate to that."

The relationship between father and son was very close. The father's example seems to have pushed Baker to become a proficient athlete and a dedicated outdoorsman. He's not much of a reader, and he has little time for museums or the opera or concerts. "His outlet is turkey hunting, not books," Bagby, the pastor, said when I asked whether Baker had another side to his busy life. Baker's closest friends concur. At least three articles on him have opened with him explaining the finer points of turkey hunting on his ranch, thirteen hundred and sixty-seven acres of scrubland south of San Antonio on which there are a couple of tents and a few wells and turkey feeders but no dwelling. The Rock Pile Ranch, as Baker calls it, is where he used to go when he could to get away from the pressure of his life. The hunting with his father, he says, began with ducks at age six or seven. And his father, a good tennis player, began playing with him when he was ten or eleven. Baker became a state-ranked junior in both singles and doubles. He was the tennis team's captain at the Hill School, and co-captain of the freshman tennis team at Princeton. He then deserted tennis for rugby, he says, because the rugby team had that trip to Bermuda and the tennis team offered nothing as tempting.

Baker's father died in 1973, at the age of eighty. His mother, now ninety-five, is still known to many as Mrs. Baker, Jr., and she lives in the house, at 1216 Bissonnet Avenue, that has been her home for sixty-three years. It is a two-story whitewashed brick building on a large corner lot; the property's most striking feature is a riot of trees and shrubs that all but screen out the midday light. The Museum of Fine Arts is a couple of blocks away, and Rice University is close by. The neighborhood, which is distinctly prosperous, is on the edge of Shadyside, where much of the old money is concentrated. New money came to the River Oaks section, and, according to the novelist Larry McMurtry, "has provided the energy that gave the town its diversity." McMurtry, who arrived in Houston in 1954 and lived there on and off until 1981, says, "I found it wonderful—friendly and porous. It was terrifically energetic and very tolerant of newcomers, in a way no other Texas city is. Houston is at ease with itself and not defensive, like Dallas. It is open to blacks, Hispanics, and Middle Easterners." Politically, Houston still conveys a sense of rugged individualism and laissez-faire; however diverse now, much of it remains very conservative. Can there, for example, be another major city anywhere that has no zoning? "Private property is sacred here," a local political figure explains. "People feel they should be free to do whatever they want with it." Neighborhoods like Shadyside and

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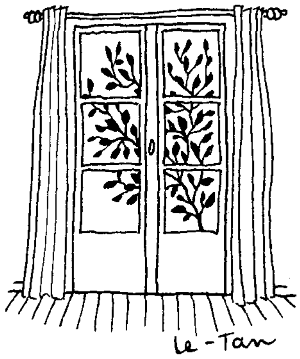

Among the city's more insular and provincial institutions was Andrews Kurth, Jimmy Baker's chosen law firm. It had very little contact with people of the sort that lawyers involved in politics are exposed to. Smaller than Baker & Botts or Vinson & Elkins, it was even more discreet and considerably more standoffish about politics. Among the clients about whom the firm had to be especially discreet was the billionaire recluse Howard Hughes; the taxes that the Hughes estate owed to Texas and California later became the subject of a major legal dispute that lasted eight years. According to Evans Attwell, an old friend of Baker's and the managing partner at Vinson & Elkins, Baker "was seen as the firm's bright young star." Another of his friends, William Lummis, who was a cousin of Howard Hughes and handled that account, says that Baker worked under one of the firm's senior partners, Harry Jones, during the twenty years or so he spent at Andrews Kurth. "Jones was a fantastic lawyer—the best I've seen at bringing parties locked in impossible conflicts together," Lummis says. "A lot of Baker's current skills were honed by that experience."

During most of Baker's time at Andrews Kurth, his life stayed within a predictable pattern. Like most promising young lawyers, he worked hard; but he stayed fit. A plaque that hangs in a hall at the Houston Country Club shows the singles tennis tournament as having been won by James A. Baker III seven times between 1958 and 1966. Another plaque records him and George Bush as having won the doubles in 1966 and 1967. In those days, Baker was often on the lookout for a promising doubles partner, and his friendship with Bush began on the tennis court. Jamie Baker says of his father's game, "His tennis isn't overpowering, but it's steady. He gets everything hit at him back, and eventually the other guy makes an unforced error. That's his M.O.—in many aspects of his life."

When George and Barbara Bush moved to Houston from Midland, Texas, in 1959, they knew about the Bakers, because Mary Stuart had lived across the street in Dayton, Ohio, from a cousin of Bush's who was called, Baker says, Teensie Bush. Also, Mary Stuart, like George, was a keen Republican, and there weren't many others around. Baker recalls that shortly after he and Mary Stuart moved to Houston, in 1957, she held a precinct meeting. "One person came," he recalled. "I served the refreshments that night. But now the Seventh District, where we lived, is the largest Republican district in the country." Of that earlier time he says, "I was apolitical—too busy trying to make it in competitive law practice. I voted Democratic then." (Some friends say that he would more often than not ignore Election Day and go hunting.) "The Republican Party barely existed, and didn't even run candidates for most local offices." Democrats controlled the state. Republicans didn't have a Presidential primary until 1964. Not before then did they put together a facsimile of a statewide Party organization.

In 1963, Bush became the chairman of Harris County, which, they say in Houston, is the country's third-most-populous county, and has more people than twenty-two states. In 1964, he ventured into elective politics by running for the United States Senate against an incumbent Democrat, Ralph Yarborough; it was a bold but rash move. Running for statewide office as a Republican was then quixotic, and, as a political matter, Bush hadn't shed his Connecticut Yankee patina. He nonetheless did well, running ahead of Barry Goldwater on the Party ticket and receiving forty-four per cent of the vote. Bush had sued to redistrict Harris County. The suit was successful, and thus the western part of Houston, by then a Republican redoubt, became the Seventh District. In 1966, Bush ran for Congress from the district and won. Running again in 1968, he was unopposed. Bush had put away the Seventh for his party, and he was gearing up for another run at Ralph Yarborough's Senate seat. He would probably have won if Yarborough, a liberal, had been the candidate, as everyone expected. But destiny—or, more accurately, John Connally—interceded to collapse Bush's hopes. Connally had left the State House in Austin early in 1969, and he, along with other Democrats, could see that in 1970 a well-worn liberal like Yarborough would have a hard time against the more conservative Bush. Connally persuaded Lloyd Bentsen, who was then running a prosperous insurance business, to run against Yarborough in the primary. Bentsen, an authentic conservative, won. Connally's political organization was intact and very good. ("The state had seen few as good," Connally says.) It was put at Bentsen's disposal and "orchestrated his campaign," Connally said. "It wasn't just an endorsement," he added, making sure that I fully understood the import of what had occurred. Bush lost, and took the defeat hard. He did carry Harris County (his and Bentsen's home county)—by sixty per cent to forty, according to Baker, who was making his political début, as Harris County campaign chairman.

Baker's friends say—and Baker agrees—that if it had not been for Mary Stuart he would not have been drawn into politics. Although she was a very private person and was absorbed in her children, she belonged to a group that was striving to make a two-party state of Texas. She was devoted to the cause of George Bush, and had served in his earlier campaigns as a "Bush belle," wearing a straw boater and passing out leaflets. Baker, after twelve years of practicing law, was ready for something new, some of his friends now say. In 1969, he considered running for Bush's congressional seat, since Bush would be vacating it to run for the Senate. Bush strongly encouraged the idea, but Baker didn't file, because Mary Stuart, who had been suffering from what was first thought to be an arthritic condition, was found to have cancer. Baker didn't tell her why he wasn't filing. She died in February of 1970, at the age of thirty-eight. It was a turning point in Baker's life, which then departed from its predictable course. "He spent a lot of time after her death sorting out what he would do with the rest of his life," William Lummis says. "He was having problems. He was trying to practice law and look after four kids. But he needed time by himself." There was guilt as well. Baker was quoted years later as saying that in fifteen years he and Mary Stuart had taken only two planned vacations.

Baker's friends rallied to him, or tried to. These friendships were—and remain—very close, dating in some cases from school days. Some of the people were also on warm terms with George Bush, but the Bush-Baker friendship, according to Al Ebert, one of Baker's two or three closest friends and a partner at Andrews Kurth, "was separate from his friendships with people like Preston Moore and me, who knew and liked Bush but were not close to him." George and Barbara Bush perhaps stayed closer to Baker than any of the others did, and helped to the extent that he could be helped. (Mary Stuart's portrait hangs in the Bush house in Kennebunkport, Maine.) A friendship that began on the tennis court was sealed by what some say was a "bonding" that resulted. Bush persuaded Baker to take the job of county chairman in his campaign that year because it would be something different and so might relieve his pain.

Three different members of Baker's circle in Houston told me that "old money is quiet money and sticks together," as one of them put it. "Being a widower in this closed society was tough," says another, a lifelong friend. "He had four boys under the age of sixteen, and their playmates were offspring of his old friends. All those memories. They all played tennis together. He had to break out of his environment."

As hard as things may have been for Baker, his four sons—Jamie, Mike, John, and Doug—seem to have had an even more difficult time. The law being a jealous mistress and Baker an unregenerate workaholic, their mother had been the center of their lives. "It was the only time when I have felt at a loss as to the future," Baker says now. "I did maintain my work habits, and I couldn't satisfy the emotional needs of the boys. I couldn't be both mother and father to them. We had a succession of housekeepers—not a happy experience. This was 1970, and a tough time to be raising kids." Two of the boys eventually developed drug problems that required in-patient hospital treatment, according to an article by Marjorie Williams in the Washington *Post* magazine. And one of them, she reported, was arrested in 1982 for selling marijuana to an undercover police officer. "He was fined $2000 and entered a drug-treatment program a short time later," she wrote.

Baker remarried in 1973. His wife, Susan Garrett Winston, was the daughter of a rich and colorful rancher, Whispering Jack Garrett. She was divorced from an old friend of Baker's, James (Jimbo) Winston, who had been an alcoholic and died of pancreatitis. Susan Winston had been among Mary Stuart's closest friends, and, according to Al Ebert, "was at her side constantly in the last days." She had three children of her own. The marriage, I had been told, came as a shock to Baker's sons, and I asked Jamie about that. "It would depend on who it was you asked," he said, adding that he had more or less expected it but his brothers might have been surprised. "About two weeks before the wedding, Dad and I were talking in the kitchen and he was about to go out with Susan somewhere," he recalled. "I said, 'Are you going to marry her?' And he said, 'Well, I don't know. What do you think I should do?' I said, 'I think

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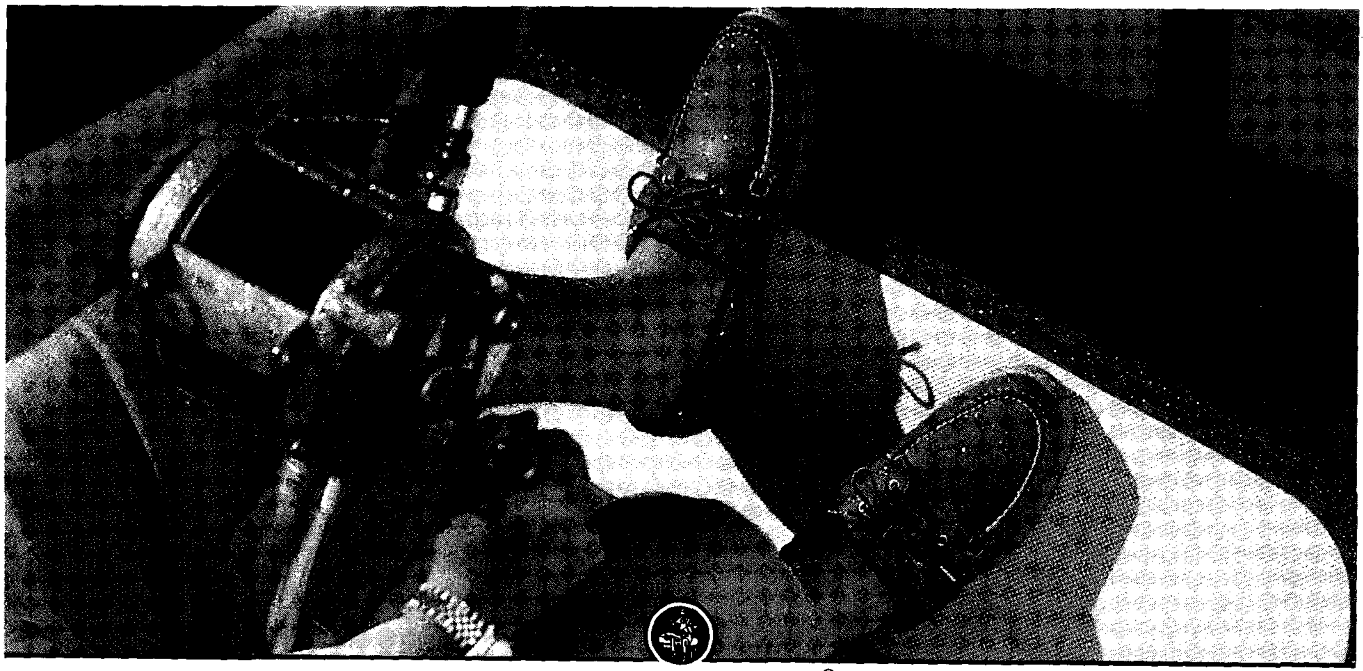

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you should do what you want to do.' That was one of the few times that he and I ever communicated directly. Now we are getting better at it. A big reason was me. After Mom died, I dealt with grief by walling it off."

Susan and her three children created a "double whammy" when they moved into the Baker ménage, according to one of the Baker lot. John Baker, who had been nine when his mother died, was quoted by Marjorie Williams as saying, "For me, he was never home, and so that was very difficult." As for the marriage, he added, "I was just bound and determined to make their life miserable, because I didn't care about anything else." He was consciously trying to break up the marriage. Susan had to cope with seven children, each of whom had experienced the loss of a parent and associated difficulties. I asked her what all that had been like.

"It was explosive—wild," she said. "We were married in August, and enrolled three kids in the seventh grade in September. My oldest daughter was six months younger than Jimmy's youngest. There were only three bedrooms at first, and they took turns sleeping on stair landings in sleeping bags. We expanded the house as fast as we could."

Susan Baker is eight years younger than her husband, and, like him, she radiates a sense of well-being and serenity, although reminders of past intrusions on their life together—notably Baker's high-pressure years in the White House—suggest that she hasn't altogether got over them, and has decidedly mixed feelings about life near the top of the tree. She smiles easily, and is easy to talk to. Among the first things one hears about Susan Baker is the intensity of her religious faith and how it sustained her in the early days of her second marriage. "If I hadn't known about prayer and the word of God, I don't know what would have happened," she says. She was raised a Catholic, but is a member of a nondenominational Bible-study group that is closely identified with Joanne Kemp, the wife of Jack Kemp, who is Bush's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. "Faith is a way of life, not just a Sunday-go-to-meeting kind of thing," she says. She doesn't feel constrained to be a member of any particular church. Susan Baker is an ally of Tipper Gore, the wife of Senator Albert Gore, Jr., in the campaign to regulate "porn rock."

"All the kids are O.K. now and are doing something," Preston Moore says of the Baker children. The Bakers concur; the same, they add, is true of Susan's three. And Baker's friends say that his second marriage is as strong as the first. Susan, they feel, is less private than Mary Stuart, but, besides being close friends, the two women had in common an interest in politics, and Susan, too, had been a Bush belle. (Another former Bush belle from old Houston is Daphne Murray, who is the director of the Institute of Museum Services.) "I've been politicking since I was little," Susan says. "My parents helped organize the Republican Party in Brazoria County. Mary Stuart and I gave our husbands hell because they were thinking Republican and still voting Democratic."

Susan Baker didn't mind coming to Washington the first time, in 1975. By then, only two of the seven children had to be uprooted (the rest were away at school or college), and Baker's job at the Commerce Department wasn't demanding enough to intrude on their lives—yet he liked it. Most people, Baker included, believe that he was invited into the Ford Administration because George Bush, while serving as United States representative to the People's Republic of China, in the mid-seventies, had urged Rogers Morton, who visited Beijing, to find a job for him. Bush and various other G.O.P. notables felt that fresh talent was needed in Washington if their party was to revive nationally in the post-Watergate period. Morton was the Secretary of Commerce, a job he was soon to leave to take over as chairman of the Ford election campaign. Baker can't be sure that Bush did take such an initiative, because Bush, for whatever reason, has never admitted doing so. Baker's stint at Commerce was short—nine months—but for three months of that time he was Acting Secretary. He was keeping the chair warm for Elliot Richardson, who was then serving as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's.

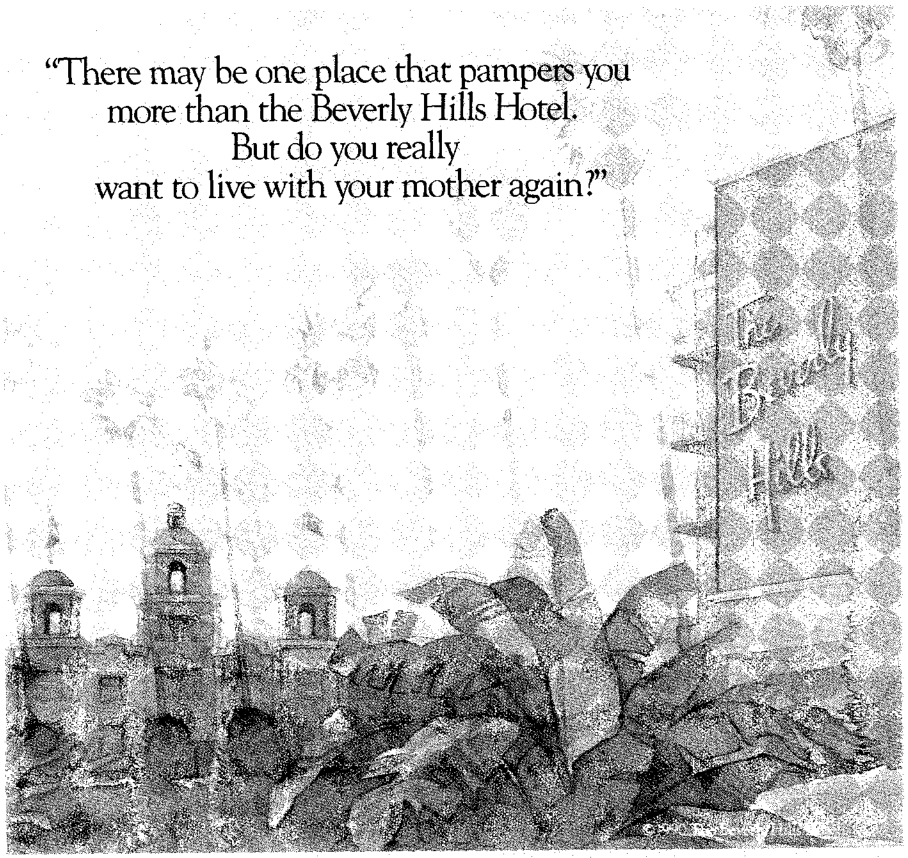
In the spring of 1976, Baker travelled to Houston on Air Force One with Gerald Ford, who asked him during the trip to leave Commerce and come to work on the campaign as chief delegate hunter. Ford's campaign was struggling, and his chief delegate hunter had just been killed in a car crash. The legend of Jimmy Baker, political wizard, begins right there. From the first day, he demonstrated instincts—how to deal with reporters, how to generate the appearance of winning—that cannot be taught. The chief delegate hunter isn't usually a potent or significant figure. A Presidential candidate's momentum normally develops after the early primaries, and delegates can be scooped up then. But 1976 was different. The struggle between Ford and Reagan probably turned on thirty to sixty delegates, so each delegate was important. John Sears, Reagan's campaign manager and a highly skilled professional, was working at this job, too. He and Baker would both issue announcements whenever one or two delegates fell in the direction of their candidate. Baker added a new wrinkle: he would give reporters the phone number of a newly bagged delegate, so they could verify his information. Sears didn't do that—it wasn't customary—and the distinction drawn by the press served Baker well: he acquired instant credibility. Nor did it harm his cause to be able to arrange breakfast meetings at the White House for undecided delegates. (Some of them appeared to reporters to be breakfasting there constantly.) Baker immediately became known as accessible and easy to deal with. "He was very well organized, and that was what the Ford campaign needed," Sears recalls. "You could see the difference after he arrived. The Reagan people thought they'd been doing well—playing the part of a less potent force than a sitting President but one that was more adroit politically and less prone to error. Baker straightened out that campaign."

After the 1976 Republican Convention, in Kansas City, Ford and his staff met in Vail, Colorado; the question of who would manage his campaign had to be settled, because Rogers Morton was then terminally ill. It was decided to ask Baker, who by then was back in Houston, to take the job. The consensus is that he did it remarkably well, almost snatching victory from Jimmy Carter, who had started with a big lead and had seemed certain to prevail over the bruised and tempest-tossed Republicans.

One who doesn't concur is John Connally, though he is a Baker admirer. "They lost the campaign, and they didn't have to," he says. Sears, for his part, feels that Baker did a first-class job, but says that as campaign manager "he seemed to lack imagination and an instinct for major moves," and adds, "He wasn't a risk taker, which sometimes you have to be." The campaign ended with money left over instead of the usual deficit, and there was some grumbling that Ford might have won if Baker had spent a little more in a couple of key states, like Ohio and Pennsylvania.

The failed campaign aroused in George Bush, who had badly wanted to run as Ford's Vice-Presidential candidate, a resolve to run for President himself, and to do so with the help of his friend and protégé Jimmy Baker. Baker himself was left with a deep and lasting thirst for more elective politics: his interest in helping Bush was exceeded by a fancy to try his own chances. "I had practiced law for twenty years, and, coming off the experience of running a Presidential campaign, I'd been bitten by the political bug," he says. A number of Texas Republicans were looking for one of their own to emerge from the state's biggest city, Houston, and become a major force in state politics. They fed Baker's desire to run. Running for governor against Dolph Briscoe was briefly considered. Baker decided that Briscoe, a conservative, couldn't be beaten, and he decided to run instead for attorney general, if only because the presumed opponent would be Price Daniel, Jr., a liberal.

Party primaries often scuttle the best-laid plans, and they did so in Texas in 1978. The popular Briscoe managed to lose the Democratic primary to the state attorney general, John Hill. And, much to Baker's disgust, Price Daniel refused to spend on the primary any of the funds he had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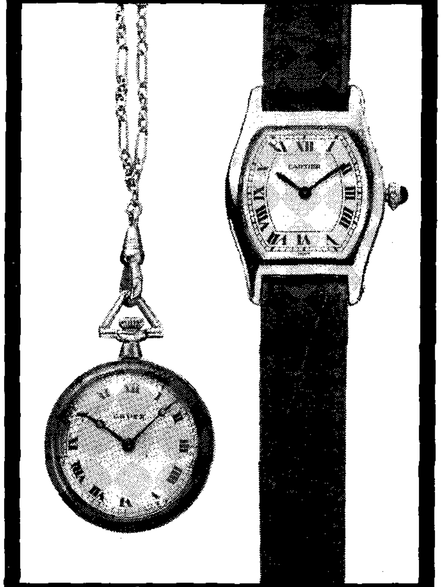

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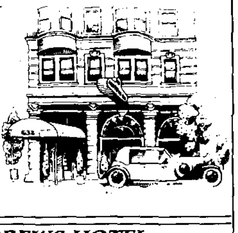

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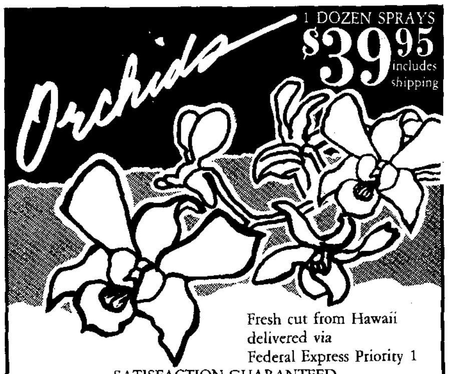

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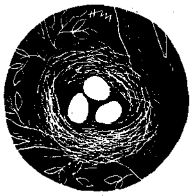
earmarked for television ads; he was saving them for the general election. But he was not to contest that, because he, too, was upset in the primary—by Mark White, a conservative, who later went on to become governor.

Baker got forty-four per cent of the vote—a better-than-respectable showing. Since Reconstruction only two Republican candidates had done as well in a "down ballot" Texas race—that is, any state office below the level of governor or United States senator. Mark White knew that he had been in a fight. "By the third debate, I sensed that this guy had got himself tuned in," he says. "And I told my staff, 'Listen, we've got this won unless we find a way of losing it.' I wasn't interested in doing a lot more debating."



Opinion divides on how Baker reacted to his defeat. Some say he took it in stride; he and Susan were seen on the following day playing tennis in T-shirts that said "Mark White for Attorney General." Yet, even though the outcome was never in serious doubt, the competitor in Baker is believed by some of his friends to have taken it badly. "I think it took him a long time to get over the anguish of having run for office and lost," Al Ebert was quoted as saying.

Agreement was nearly unanimous on one point: Baker had been uncomfortable with the retail end of politics. "He is an unbelievably fierce competitor," says Evans Attwell, who, like Bush, had won a doubles championship with Baker. "In that campaign, he had beautifully done-up press kits. Everything was organized to the nines, because he is always so remarkably well prepared. He did very well in the cities, thanks mainly to his superior organization. But he was uncomfortable in rural settings. He doesn't like small talk, and is not very good at it."

"He didn't relish the essential ingredients in Texas politics—barbecues and small functions," Al Ebert says.

"It's hard for me to imagine my dad putting on a hat with a pig snout and hugging old ladies and kissing babies," Jamie Baker says.

Among those who knew, only Susan Baker said that Baker was comfortable campaigning for himself. "He enjoyed it," she told me, "even if he wasn't a typical good-old-boy pol—except for the money-raising. 'I hate having to ask people to give me money,' he'd say."

Everyone agrees that George Bush was an anxious offstage presence. He was gearing up for his run for the roses, and he quite clearly wanted Baker at his side, not in Austin. Only fourteen months separated the end of Baker's ill-advised campaign from the first 1980 Presidential event, the Iowa caucus. "I had talked to George Bush about my running," Baker recalls. "He said that it would be uphill and that a down-ballot race wouldn't attract much attention anyway." He and Bush had gone to California earlier in 1978 to inform Reagan that Bush intended to run for President in 1980—recognizing, Bush said, that Reagan, too, was running and would be the front-runner. "This was a very classy gesture," says Mike Deaver, who was there, and who then accompanied Reagan when he came to Texas in 1978 to campaign for Baker. Deaver, like Stuart K. Spencer, Reagan's closest political adviser, was strongly impressed by Baker, and had spoken to him even before Bush's visit about joining the Reagan camp. Deaver recalls Baker's saying, "I'll do whatever George wants me to do."

Before running for office himself, Baker had begun Bush's long march by organizing a political-action committee for him. I asked Baker whether people in Houston and elsewhere in Texas took Bush seriously as an opponent of John Connally, who was also running in the Republican primaries. "Everyone laughed at us," he replied. "They said Connally would clean our clocks. 'How can you do this?' they asked."

Of the moves that Baker made as campaign manager in 1980, two stand out. The first concerned Bush's derisive characterization of the so-called Reaganomics as "voodoo economics." The phrase was written into a Bush speech by his press secretary, Peter Teeley. Upon hearing it, Baker vetoed further use of the term. He didn't disagree, but he had for some time been focussing on the Vice-Presidency, and didn't want to close off that possibility by offending the Reagan camp. Similar reasoning may have influenced Baker's second, and far more significant, move.

By May of 1980, Reagan had clearly won the nomination, but Bush, although he was beaten, wouldn't give up. Baker and Bush's other advisers wanted him to announce his withdrawal from the remaining primaries, including California's, that he had planned to contest. Not withdrawing, they argued, could split the Party and harm Bush's prospects. Taylor Branch, in his article in the *Texas Monthly* in 1982, cited one of Bush's campaign aides as saying, "Jimmy made the decision to knock George out of the campaign without telling him. . . . It had to be done. Jimmy Baker had to cut his best friend off at the knees, and he did it." Baker denies having made any such high-handed move. "What happened is this," he says. "We were short of money. I was running a decoy operation in California to make the Reagan people think we would make the effort there. I sent two people out there. After a couple of weeks, the press began to smell a rat, and when they asked what we really had going out there I told the truth. 'We have nothing going out there,' I said. It was already obvious to the press that we weren't going to contest California. We had no resources. The press reported this as signalling the end of the road for George Bush, and that did come as a surprise to him. He quite properly anguished over what to do. He felt obligated to contest Ohio and New Jersey, where people had gone out on a limb for him."

Bush was campaigning in New Jersey when the news of Baker's press conference reached him. He was reported to have been furious, and, it was said, his family had been, too. Baker justified his action, according to Branch, by noting that if Bush had stayed in the race and entered Reagan's home state he would not have been forgiven and become Vice-President. I asked Mike Deaver whether Reagan would have kept Bush off the ticket if he had continued. "Nancy would have been ticked off if he had gone into California," Deaver said. "He already had voodoo economics to live down."

Asked to assess the probable effect of this episode on the Bush-Baker relationship, John Sears said, "It had to jar it. Candidates don't like it when the campaign manager is proved right and they are wrong. But these kinds of tensions are normal, even when things are going well. It is a totally different

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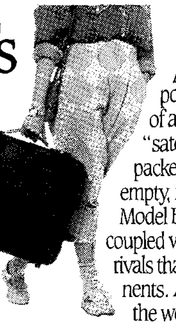

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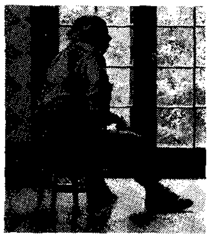

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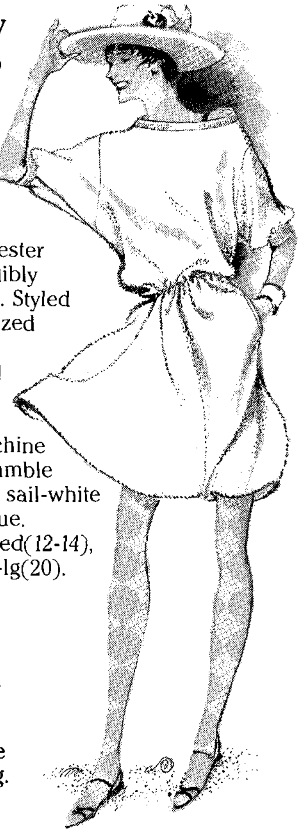

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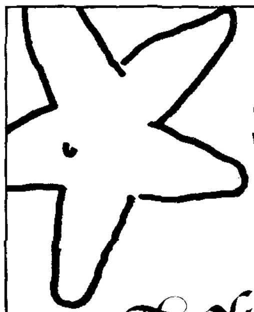

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Bush and Baker had been at cross-purposes for over a year: one was striving to become the President, the other to secure the second spot on the ticket for him; Baker knew that the top spot wasn't attainable, and that capturing second place could be difficult. "We went to the Convention without the foggiest notion of who the V.P. would be," Deaver says. At about ten o'clock on the night of the nomination, Deaver called Henry Kissinger, who seemed to be Ford's negotiator, and said that Reagan wanted to know whether Ford would join the ticket. Ford thereupon went to see Reagan and told him the answer was no. Reagan, without hesitating, picked up the phone and called Bush. "No one prompted him," Deaver says. "In twenty years, this was one of two or three times I saw him do something like that without prompting or coaching."

There was no love lost between Bush and Reagan, but, as Baker says, "Bush was the only other one at the Convention with delegates and an independent following." As for Baker, he found himself being invited by Stu Spencer to help out in the campaign—on the Reagan plane, not Bush's—and he accepted. "Early in September," Bob Strauss recalls, "Baker came by my apartment for a drink and said, 'Bob, one thing I want you to understand. I haven't been with the Reagan people long. I know how much authority I don't have. You may be able to commit the President, but I'm only an agent.' But by mid-October he was a dominant part of the process. And that, in my judgment, is how the Reagan campaign evolved. As chairman of the Carter campaign, I wasn't happy that he had moved up." On the issue of the number and format of the Carter-Reagan debates, it was Jim Baker whom Strauss encountered on the other side of the negotiating table. Baker says that fitting into the Reagan campaign wasn't especially difficult. Edwin Meese III, a major Reagan adviser, didn't want him there, but by then Baker had more political experience than anyone in the Reagan group except Stu Spencer, and was the only person around who had run a Presidential campaign. Baker had been parachuted into an enemy camp, and he was there to stay.

ED MEESE had been chief of staff when Reagan was governor, and he expected to have the same role in Washington. Just before the campaign ended, Mike Deaver took Stu Spencer aside and observed that someone would have to run the government, and asked if Jim Baker would be interested. Spencer thought that Baker would be. Deaver then told Reagan that even though he, Reagan, was superstitious, he would nonetheless have to start thinking about what would happen after the election, and who the chief of staff would be. Deaver noted Meese's interest, but added that a few of the other Reagan people, including him, thought the job should go to someone with Washington experience. Reagan didn't reply, and Deaver cited Baker as an example of what he had in mind. Reagan asked, as he invariably did when aides proposed someone for a big job, "Do you think he'd do it?" Deaver said yes. Deaver had taken the essential precaution of clearing his idea with Nancy Reagan, and she talked with her husband about it. "Deaver's relationship with Nancy Reagan was very useful to Baker," a former Baker aide says. "She was very good about identifying the people who could help her husband, and Baker handled her very skillfully."

Meese heard the bad news over lunch with Reagan and Deaver the day after the election. He wouldn't be chief of staff but would be Reagan's counsellor—an idea that Deaver had planted with Reagan. Reagan told Meese that he didn't want him running day-to-day operations, because he needed his judgment and counsel. Meese never trusted Deaver again, Deaver says.

The following day, Baker met with Reagan and Meese at the Century Plaza Hotel, in Los Angeles, and produced a piece of paper that split the functions of the chief of staff and the counsellor into two columns. He was linking his acceptance of the job to a clear and binding definition of his and Meese's roles. The document, which both signed, gave Meese more prestige, but Baker, wiser in the ways of power, would have more of that. Meese, he agreed, would have Cabinet rank and the right to coördinate and supervise the operations of the N.S.C. staff and the Domestic Policy staff. But Baker reserved to himself control of the President's schedule and the flow of paper in and out of the Oval Office—a power that he knew would allow him to dominate White House operations. A key intangible was Baker's unexcelled gift for working the press. He would envelop White House reporters in what one of them later described as "a conspiracy of candor." His enemies—Meese and other Reaganauts—seethed over Baker's alleged penchant for leaking stories that suited his purposes.

Some high achievers are reluctant to let anyone flourish in their shade, and so do not recruit the best people. Baker is a very conspicuous exception. He understands better than most that high performance and a high-quality staff have a one-to-one relationship. Thus, even though he had to live down being an outsider, he recruited non-Reaganauts for key staff jobs. Foremost among them was Richard G. Darman, who is currently the director of the Office of Management and Budget; he had worked with Baker at the Commerce Department. Darman would have flunked any litmus test administered by the Meese faction. He is a product of Harvard College and its faculty, and had served as a senior aide to Elliot Richardson, an unflawed model of traditional Northeast Republicanism, in each of Richardson's numerous Cabinet jobs. Darman, too, had the patina of an Eastern liberal. That aside, he and Baker complemented each other perfectly. Whereas Darman was undiplomatic, impatient, and even abrasive, Baker was endlessly patient and tactful. More important, Darman, besides being a fellow-workaholic, was a first-class heavy-duty thinker, with an obsessive interest in problem solving; he excelled at political strategy, just as Baker excelled at political tactics. Baker had unerring instincts, Darman an uncanny feel for putting together the bureaucratic tools to transmute the Baker instincts into policy. Together, Baker and Darman ran rings around the others. As the press continued to report on them, the hard right grumbled about each, but it was unable to clip the wings of a partnership that soared into legend within the Beltway.

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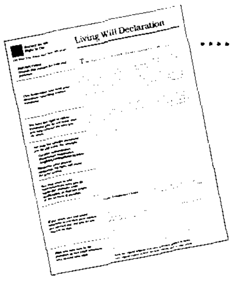

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Meese compact—"had to be produced from time to time just to keep Meese at bay," Deaver says. "It was awful—just awful—toward the end." Meese, the ideologue, was the only member of the troika—Baker, Deaver, and himself—who had a serious interest in the substance of policy. But he was far too disorganized to push the ball down the field very far. Baker says very little about his time in the White House. An old Houston friend recalls asking him if he would ever consider writing about it and Baker's saying, "No, but what I remember best is what they didn't do—all the crazy things."

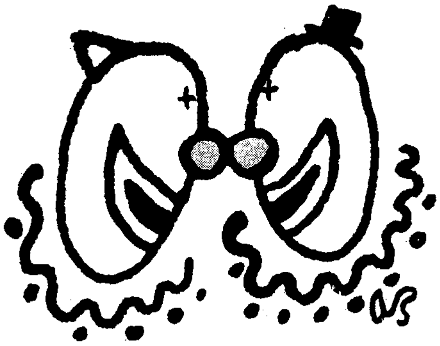
I asked Baker whether, being an outsider and an ally of Bush, he had been able to keep his friend the Vice-President in the loop.

"I had to establish my loyalty to President Reagan, and I did that," he replied guardedly. (Affable but guarded is the Baker style.) "I was able to do that without affecting my relationship with George Bush. Our offices were next to each other, and I would often drop in." Actually, keeping Bush in the loop wasn't difficult, since Reagan was a remarkably hands-off chief executive. A copy of everything prepared for him was made for Bush—a situation that can hardly be compared with that of the Bush White House, from which a torrent of notes and phone calls to world figures and people around the country routinely goes forth. Keeping Vice-President Quayle in the loop just wouldn't be possible.

With Baker gone from the White House in Reagan's second term, Bush had a thinner time. "When Jimmy was here, it was different," he would tell his staff. Bush never felt at ease with Howard Baker when he was brought in to replace Donald Regan, Baker's successor as chief of staff, and take charge of a White House operation that seemed on the verge of capsizing. Bush also felt that the White House was keeping its distance from him in the second term because Senator Robert Dole impressed some as the stronger contender for the next Presidential nomination.

Jimmy Baker did fail—dramatically, at that—when he tried, with Deaver's help (and doubtless Nancy Reagan's as well), to stage a palace coup that would have put him and Darman in charge of the N.S.C. staff; Deaver would have replaced Baker as chief of staff (although Baker would have retained some responsibility for operations generally). Baker was keen to acquire experience in national-security matters; the White House's domestic affairs were running smoothly, but the decision-making process for foreign policy was wholly chaotic. Baker and Darman were determined to fix it and leave their imprint. Opportunity arrived in October of 1983, when William Clark, the national-security adviser and a chief Reagan crony, announced that he was moving on to be Interior Secretary. Darman then drafted an announcement of the Baker-Deaver plan which Reagan could give to the press. But first Reagan had to meet with and tell the other key players. Baker then made perhaps the greatest error of his career: he decided not to attend this meeting. A rump group composed of Meese, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, the C.I.A. director, William Casey, and Clark himself took Reagan aside to argue against the Baker plan. They won. Robert McFarlane became the N.S.C. adviser, and Baker stayed where he was. But the tensions let loose by this affair stayed on, too, and helped persuade Baker to pass up another stint in the Reagan White House. "Baker lost a lot of heart after that episode," Deaver says. "He never felt that Reagan really trusted him."

In politics, it's best to leave a job before being forced to go. Politicians constantly evaluate their positions—where they are and where they want to be. Setting a brisk pace is one way to keep one's enemies off balance, and Baker had accumulated several enemies on his party's far right. Moreover, he was tired. He had held Washington's most demanding job longer than anyone else, with the exceptions of Sherman Adams, who served with Dwight Eisenhower and was brought down by scandal, and H. R. Haldeman, a casualty of Watergate. It seems that for a time he wanted to be baseball commissioner. Deaver recalls that Peter Ueberroth, a friend of his from college days at San Jose State (and the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Committee chairman), phoned one day early in 1984 to say that Baker was trying to have himself made baseball commissioner and would fail, because Ueberroth himself would be named to that job. Ueberroth warned that a news story would embarrass Baker and the White House. Deaver recalls saying, "It's impossible. We have no secrets." Deaver says that he then confronted Baker, who said, "He isn't going to get it, and I'm not, either." (Ueberroth was named baseball commissioner, several weeks later.)



What Baker did arrange was a simple job swap with Donald Regan. He had wanted State or Treasury, and the first was not available. In his book, "For the Record," Regan claims credit for the idea of swapping jobs, although some Baker watchers feel that Baker may have subtly planted an idea that Regan came to regard as his own. Baker demurs. "It was Regan's idea," he states flatly. "He said, 'I'm going to make you an offer you can't refuse.' "

Deaver recalls that Regan came to his house and said, "You are the logical guy. The President wants you. I'll drop the idea if you are interested." Deaver wasn't, and Baker, he says, then asked him to take up the idea with Reagan. After first covering the Nancy Reagan base, Deaver approached Reagan, who said he wanted to think about it. "He may have wanted to discuss it with Nancy," Deaver says. The next day, Reagan spoke with Regan and then told Deaver that the job swap was approved. Baker had managed to separate himself from an increasingly poisonous environment and would have a show of his own to run. Regan had separated himself from an office that gave him a good deal less power and influence than he had expected, and would move into the office where, as he had discovered, the real power was centered. The loser in the exchange was Ronald Reagan, not to mention the national interest.

"TRY a metaphor—turkey hunting—if you want to understand Baker," says the most astute Baker watcher I know. "He combines caution, patience, and discipline in extraordinary measure, and also has an unbelievable instinct for taking action at just the right moment. Turkey hunting demands fantastic patience, discipline, and this rare instinct for knowing exactly when to act." A lot of hardship is also involved. At Rock Pile Ranch, Baker rouses his guests at about 4:30 A.M., and everyone must then attack the surrounding area with large sticks so as to clear away any rattlesnakes and scorpions that may be lurking about; all this is happening before sunrise. One wears camouflage garb and is covered from head to toe for protection against ticks and occasional columns of red ants. Because the turkey's sight and hearing are astonishingly acute, the hunters must neither move nor speak. Any sound or movement spooks the birds, and they may not reappear for days. As the sun rises, it becomes very hot very quickly. Baker, I'm told, may sit there immobile and silent until as late as 4:30 P.M. But when the turkeys appear he knows just when to fire or to signal a guest to fire. What some guests remember as a truly hellish experience is Baker's passion, and in South Texas he is widely known for his prowess in felling the furtive turkey.

At Treasury, the wary Baker avoided mixing into the troubled affairs of the Regan-run White House, and stayed close to his job. There he reversed some of his predecessor's entrenched policies within a short time. First, and most important, he and Darman, who came with him as Deputy Secretary, challenged the notion that the foreign-exchange market is always right, and that wherever it puts the dollar in relation to other currencies must be the right place. Since the beginning of Reagan's first term, the dollar had been allowed to rise by as much as seventy-three per cent, even though its inflated value was a drag on economic growth—especially on exports. Protectionist tendencies were aroused. At the Plaza Hotel in New York in September of 1985, the United States and Britain, France, West Germany, and Japan—the major hard-currency nations—met and agreed to act together so that exchange rates would from then on more closely reflect "fundamental" market forces. The initiative for the meeting was Baker's. He and the other finance ministers, along with the central-bank governors, agreed on a program for lowering the value of the dollar and raising the value of the other currencies. (Italy and Canada later joined the effort.) The second step involved coördinating economic policy within the same countries. Before Baker and Darman arrived, Regan and his people had been saying to them, in effect, "Just follow our example and you will be O.K." The collegial approach was quickly seen to make more sense.

Baker's role in much the most dramatic happening on his watch—tax reform—is far from clear-cut. Regan had proposed a far-reaching reform of the tax code—one that even liberal reformers applauded—which was known as Treasury I. Baker saw it as strewn with traps politically, hence as undesirable. He was not about to fall on his sword for tax reform, however rational and desirable, that would anguish—indeed, enrage—large sectors of the business community. But Ronald Reagan, apparently without understanding the politically lethal nature of Treasury I, got himself committed to tax reform in his 1985 State of the Union message. Having praised Trea-

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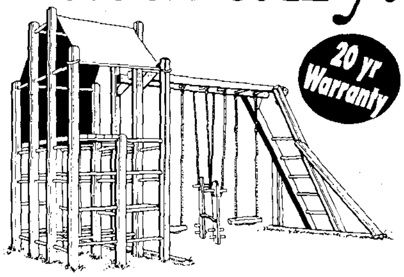

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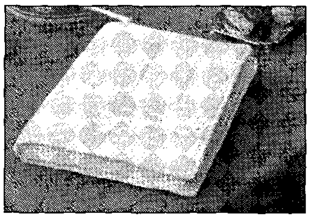

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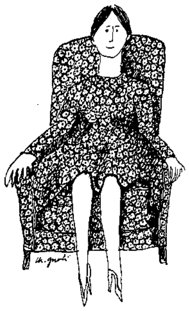
sury I as an "excellent reform plan" in his address, he expressed doubt on the following day about whether he could support the sweeping changes embodied in it. Still, he was tilting toward reform of some kind. That much was clear.

Darman had already begun to reconsider Treasury I, seeing in it strong political plusses as well as minuses. "I sometimes wish I had thought of it myself," he was later quoted as saying. Although Baker had got himself behind the power curve, he caught up fast. He and Darman launched secret negotiations with the key players in Congress. The result was the tax-revision act of 1986. Baker drew a lot of credit for his role in working it out with his interlocutors on Capitol Hill, most of whom actually cared about tax reform and were taking political risks. He shared none of their intellectual involvement with or commitment to the enterprise; nor was he taking risks. He was merely doing a job, and, as usual, he did it well. Into the bargain, he took care of a constituency—the oil and natural-gas drillers—with which he and Bush had had a lot of experience. Regan's Treasury I would have forced this industry to share the pain with other sectors by peeling back its large tax break. Baker deflected pressure in that direction: his plan imposed a small, all but cosmetic alteration in the tax allowance for the oil and natural-gas people.



Baker's time at the Treasury was not unmarked by controversy. He rarely puts a foot wrong, especially in public, but he did so over the weekend that preceded Black Monday, October 19, 1987—the day of the stock market's historic plunge. In two television interviews—one Saturday, one Sunday—he hinted that unless West Germany stopped squeezing America with unnecessarily high interest rates the Administration would abandon the multinational accord and allow the dollar to fall. His words aroused fears of a rise in American interest rates, and thereby contributed to what happened on Black Monday, according to several financial analysts and economists. Other experts felt that the market would have taken its bath with or without the Baker warning.

The ripple effect of the crash complicated what was already a tough question for Baker: whether to take charge of George Bush's headless Presidential campaign, and, if so, when. "Black Monday meant that Baker had to stay on the job for at least six months," a close associate says. "His glitch made it important for him to be there and go from strength to strength." Add to that Baker's fondness for the job, a serious doubt about his friend's prospects as a Presidential candidate, and, perhaps most important, a distaste he had developed for campaigns—above all, primary campaigns. A return to those squalid affairs would amount to a giant step down from the political height that Baker had reached in the nineteen-eighties. Despite his political gift, he has a strong aversion to being thought of as a politician. There was his grandfather's admonition about politics, and the certainty that his father would have deplored the descent from a highly responsible Cabinet post back into raw politics. (One wonders whether Baker ever paused to reflect on what his father and grandfather would have said about the Bush campaign against Dukakis.) "I would have preferred to help my pal by keeping the economy on track rather than by reacquiring the patina of the pol," Baker says now. "But George Bush knew from Day One that I'd be available in the general election. 'I'll be there if you want me,' I said."

Bush's key people admired Baker and hoped that he would take command. "My fear was that he'd join too late—that his presence would be only symbolic," recalls one former aide, who, like some others, suspected a hidden agenda; Baker, they felt, might be reasoning that if Bush didn't make it and Michael Dukakis did, the path to the G.O.P. nomination in 1992 wouldn't be blocked by a sitting Republican President. A canvass of Party professionals who know Baker and Bush throws doubt on the hidden-agenda theory. Baker's own words probably capture his position well, although he does seem to have delayed the inevitable as long as possible. He left the Treasury on August 5th and took over as campaign manager little more than a week before the Convention, in New Orleans. A decision-maker had arrived. Until then, a committee of six people—equals—had been in charge. The crucial decision, of course, was the choice for Vice-President. Two of the six—Robert Teeter and Roger Ailes—were pushing Dan Quayle, who was a name on the short short list. Ailes had handled the media and Teeter the polling when Quayle ran for reëlection to the Senate in 1986. They knew that Quayle would play well to the Party's right wing; his youth might also give the ticket a big "generational bump." Bush was listening to everyone, including Baker, and saying nothing. It was assumed—wrongly, it turned out—that Baker would have a lot to say about the choice.

The relationship between a Presidential candidate and his manager tests both people. "If you begin as close friends, it is even more difficult," John Sears says. "The candidate can't be objective, and the campaign manager doesn't want him trying to be, because he may become less responsive to advice. Candidates start thinking, and it messes up their heads. A candidate shouldn't think." Or, as David Keene, another Republican campaign adviser, has noted, "handlers and consultants and managers always tend to view the candidate as a necessary pain in the ass."

Bush didn't share his thinking about the Vice-Presidential choice with Baker, or with his own family, either. On the plane to New Orleans, Baker, Ailes, Fuller, and Teeter held a lottery on the question, with each tossing in a name. By then, most of them thought that either Robert Dole or Jack Kemp would be picked. No one guessed right, although Ailes, Fuller, and Teeter in varying degrees preferred Quayle. "I was told when we hit the ground in New Orleans," Baker says. "He told me about fifteen minutes before telling the others."

Baker, I'm told, felt that at one point Quayle had been removed from consideration. Some of those close to Baker thought that Dole was his choice. Baker has never disclosed to anyone—not even his wife—what his own recommendation was. He and his staff reacted angrily, according to a senior Bush aide. "Although the staff members were part of the Bush camp, their first loyalty was to Baker, and there was a lot of irritation," the aide says. " 'Baker didn't pick this guy, but we have to clean up the mess' is what they were saying." Some of this reaction quickly found its way into print, and a recent book by *Newsweek's* special election teams says, "Baker didn't need to be told they had a problem. He had been appalled by Quayle's performance [after the announcement] and was angry at himself and his boss, associates said, for the situation he found himself in, sweeping up a mess he had done his best to prevent. Jimmy was *used* to his friend doing stupid things, one chum who saw him soon after the convention said, but not on so epic a scale; he was, in this account, tired, frustrated, aggravated, disgusted with the slipshod screening process and furious with the vice president, who had wrought it." Bush had blown his first big-league decision, and only Quayle was there to take the heat with him.

As a candidate himself in 1978, Baker ran an exemplary campaign. And the earlier campaigns he had managed for others were high-road affairs. Yet he did nothing in the fall of

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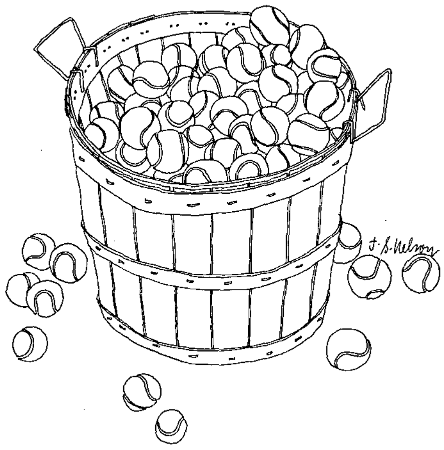
1988 to moderate the smarmy attack-dog style of the campaign against Dukakis. Obscured by the public squalor were Baker's cunning and experience. In the negotiations over the number and the timing of the debates between the candidates, for example, he routed Paul Brountas, Dukakis's friend and Harvard Law School classmate. Susan Estrich, the other side's campaign manager, had tried to offset the inexperience of Brountas by pairing him with Richard Moe, a Washington lawyer who had taken part in past debate negotiations. But Moe never got into the room. Baker called Brountas and objected to Moe on the ground of a conflict of interest; Moe, he said, was vice-chairman of the Commission on Presidential Debates, and it wasn't then clear whether this group or the League of Women Voters would sponsor the debates. That was a transparent ploy; there was no conflict. Baker just didn't want to negotiate with someone who had been over this ground (once with him, actually, in 1980) if he could deal with a novice instead. Baker hadn't really expected Brountas to bump Moe. But Brountas did, and Bob Strauss later told Moe that Baker had had a good laugh over it.

Baker's role in the new Administration was a matter of great interest not just to him but to a handful of others who would be joining Bush, and to some who would be giving him advice from the outside. Would Baker be only the Secretary of State—nothing more? Wouldn't Bush want to exploit Baker's across-the-board competence and experience? A page-one story in the *Times* less than a week after the election suggested that Baker's reach would extend into "many aspects of domestic and economic policy as well as foreign affairs." Unnamed aides of Bush were cited as sources. The *Times* suggested, further, that Baker's instrument for enhancing his authority might be Darman. Farther down in the story, Edward Rollins, a prominent Republican operative, was quoted as saying that "for all practical purposes, Jim Baker will be deputy President." Two days later, another story in the *Times* reported tension over whether Bush would make John Sununu or Craig Fuller his chief of staff, Fuller having held that job while Bush was Vice-President. Bush was said to be leaning toward John Sununu. The story also talked about a White House troika composed of Fuller, Sununu, and Teeter.

Various Baker loyalists and friends suggested that Baker had been set up. Stories like that, they said, could only anger the President and complicate life for Baker, who in any case would have his hands full as Secretary of State. It's true that Bush was angered by the stories. (He concealed his feelings well.) However, Baker had not been set up; the sources for the stories were not his enemies. On the contrary. Baker was unhappy about the prospect of Sununu's becoming chief of staff, for Sununu would surely be a strong and competitive player. Baker had wanted to see Fuller, an ally, in that role. As for the reference to Darman, the plan, it seems, had been for Baker to manage foreign policy and Darman domestic policy; Fuller would have functioned as their surrogate. That was in a way reminiscent of the coup de main that Baker, Deaver, and Darman nearly achieved in the Reagan White House in October of 1983. And the two stories in the *Times*, which turned up nowhere else, may have reminded Bush that his friend of thirty years had an agenda that was far from simple.

ALTHOUGH Baker had little direct experience with foreign policy when he arrived in the Secretary of State's cherry-panelled seventh-floor office overlooking the Lincoln Memorial, he did intend to isolate his department's principal business from the busy hands of its career professionals. He arrived with four aides, each of whom had worked for him in other places. The four became an inner circle; they alone had direct access to Baker and were familiar with most of what went on. Baker had operated in this way at Treasury—a place where four competent people can shape what is reported about its rather specialized business. A Treasury story rarely finds its way to page one, and even more rarely to a spot on the evening network news. Few congressional bodies follow Treasury's affairs closely. State is a far different place. It seethes with news, much of which is shared with or spills into other agencies and, in any case, cannot be contained or managed or, these days, screened from tight congressional scrutiny. "Baker doesn't understand that you can't keep foreign policy off page one when you want to," the chairman of a major congressional committee told me last spring.



Direct responsibility for the press was vested in Margaret Tutwiler, who for many years has been a combination of aide and alter ego for Baker. Some Republican professionals feel that her political antennae are as sensitive as Baker's, and that this sensitivity explains the relationship. (She and Darman are probably his only real friends in Washington. While he is on warm terms with a few others, like Bob Strauss, he and they aren't actual friends but are useful to each other.) Tutwiler, who is thirty-nine, is a former débutante from a suburb of Birmingham, Alabama. She got to know Baker during the Ford campaign, and worked closely with him in the White House and then at Treasury, where she was Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and also the spokeswoman. She has the same job at State. Reporters who cover the Department say she did not want the spokeswoman role but Baker insisted that she take it. He wanted someone in that job who sees the domestic political aspects of an issue exactly as he does, and is a reflection of him in fielding questions from the press. Reporters and career diplomats alike say that Tutwiler is very capable but is miscast as spokeswoman. Like Baker, she came to State with little knowledge of foreign policy, but her transition was tougher than his and isn't yet complete. As spokeswoman, she is still uncomfortable when reporters take her beyond the guidance that State's experts have prepared. But her shaky grasp of substance isn't a concern of Baker's. "She controls his schedule by overseeing the office that schedules him," a senior diplomat says. "She is a comparable political brain, and therefore is next to him at nearly all his meetings with foreign ministers and ambassadors, and also at his staff meetings.” Another says, “She tells him what he can do and not do. When she speaks, he listens.”

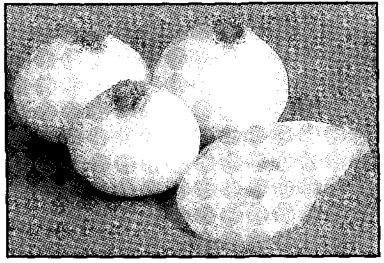
Diplomats say that listening carefully to Tutwiler’s answers to questions is as good a way as any of finding out what Baker is working on at a given moment. According to a story in the *Times*, it was she who inspired a tougher initial Administration response to the carnage in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square in June of 1989. Bush and Baker had been loath to disrupt the government-to-government rapport, the story says, until she called Baker at home and said, “You’ve got to turn on your TV set. You can’t believe what’s happening unless you see these tanks.” A longtime member of the State press corps says, “She is seen by us as a great spokesperson for Jim Baker, but not for the Department, and they are two different entities.”

There was no mistaking the new Secretary of State’s priorities—Congress and the press—or his determination to manage both constituencies. On January 30th, three days after his arrival, Baker gave a cocktail party for State reporters and their spouses. This was an unusual gesture. The customary party for the diplomatic corps was not held last year, because, I’m told, a date for it that fitted into Baker’s schedule couldn’t be found.

Baker understands better than most the need for bipartisanship in foreign policy, and does more than most predecessors to promote it. A conspicuous example is the bipartisan agreement he reached with congressional leaders early in the Administration to settle the rancorous struggle over aid to the Nicaraguan Contras. With this accord, the Administration’s foreign policy was off to a good start with Congress. Baker put in about forty hours on Capitol Hill working it out, Tutwiler says. The process began with a dinner that Bob Strauss held for Baker; Nicholas Brady, the Secretary of the Treasury; and Jim Wright, who was then the Speaker of the House and the foremost congressional critic of policy on Nicaragua. (During the negotiations over tax reform, Strauss had arranged a similar affair for Baker; Senator Lloyd Bentsen, the chairman of the Finance Committee; and Dan Rostenkowski, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.)

There was a bittersweet tinge to Baker’s early success; the agreement was criticized by C. Boyden Gray, the White House legal counsel, as having encroached upon Presidential powers. Gray’s reproach momentarily revived what had been for Baker a searing episode a few weeks before. He and Gray, both of whom are members of distinguished Southern families and heirs to old money, had come under fire for putative conflicts of interest involving their private assets. Gray’s trouble began first, and, rightly or wrongly, he was seen by many in Washington as having tried to divert attention from himself by disclosing Baker’s possession of a multimillion-dollar block of stock in Chemical Bank, one of the big banks with considerable debt exposure in the Third World. The subject of Third World debt was, of course, one that Baker had been immersed in at Treasury and would be involved with again at State. He had for many years held stock in Texas Commerce Bancshares, the offspring of the bank that Captain Baker, his grandfather, ran. In May of 1987, that company merged with Chemical New York, the holding company of Chemical Bank. In February of 1989, Baker’s apparent reluctance to divest himself of the shares was roundly criticized. “Imagine that you are a cabinet officer whose actions can rescue American banks that have lent billions in shaky loans to third world countries,” the *Times* thundered. “Should you hold stock in one of these banks? The obvious answer is no, but it doesn’t seem obvious to . . . James Baker.”

“I never dealt with matters in which that bank was involved,” Baker says now. “That was the advice of the lawyers. Whatever I did was pursuant to the advice of career government lawyers. My grandfather had been chairman of the predecessor bank. My father was chairman of the executive committee of that bank, and he’d been a director. It once represented a large part of what we had as a family. I took a big hit, but it took me only three days to sell the stock and everything else I had that was public.” Baker was inclined at first, according to reports, to



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seek a waiver of the conflict-of-interest rule. Then, as the pressure grew, he divested, as he says. But his conduct surprised most people who know him—in Houston as well as in Washington—because it constituted an egregious political blunder, and he almost never makes those. Quite clearly, nothing in this life other than an old family tie could have clouded Baker's political judgment as this matter did.

Besides Tutwiler, Baker's incoming inner sanctum consisted of Robert M. Kimmitt, Dennis B. Ross, and Robert B. Zoellick. Kimmitt became Under-Secretary for Political Affairs, State's third-ranking title. A lawyer, he had been, among other things, the general counsel of the N.S.C. and of Treasury, and he is now responsible for managing State's role in the interagency process. Ross, who runs policy planning, served as Bush's senior foreign-policy adviser during the campaign. He has been in and out of government for nine years, specializing in both Soviet and Middle Eastern affairs. Zoellick, who worked first for Darman and then for Baker at Treasury, is probably the primus inter pares of the trio. Zoellick is known as the Gatekeeper and the Super Exec. Sec. Any paper destined for Baker must first be cleared by Zoellick. Although he is less experienced in foreign policy than Kimmitt or Ross, he is judged to be authentically brilliant, and he is as quick a study as Baker himself.

The attitude of the career foreign service toward the new leadership has evolved from deep hostility to ambivalence. Rightly, professional diplomats felt altogether shut out for a time, and to some extent they still are. "It's like reading the reviews instead of seeing the play," one of them comments. Baker and his small team were obviously more than bright enough, but at first they struck people at State as being unaware of or indifferent to what they didn't know and might not have time to learn. The Baker system was reminiscent of the tight control that Henry Kissinger exercised over State when he was Secretary. He, too, relied on four people, but career diplomats recall that system as having been slightly more porous than this one; they add that Kissinger and his quartet had had a good deal more direct experience with foreign policy at the outset than Baker and his lot.

Being led by someone who is close to the President appeals to career people, and they were also pleased to see that Baker and his team had no doctrinal side—that, indeed, Bush's national-security apparatus would be shorn of the ideological hangups that disfigured the Reagan era. Most career people who know Baker like him, and they are impressed by him and his first circle but remain somewhat skeptical about what they are likely to achieve. "I have seen a lot of seventh floors, and this one is head and shoulders above the rest," one closely involved diplomat says, yet he and others complain that no effort is being made to define America's role in a changing world. No one, they say, is looking at where major pieces on the board, such as China and Japan, ought to fit. "It has become a Gorbachev-centered foreign policy," one of them says. "But there is no creative interest in where his disintegrating country might be headed." Baker and Bush, diplomats say, avoid problems that offer high risks and low returns—low political returns, that is.

Moreover, a system that relies on an unusual compatibility of key players—in this case, Bush, Baker, Scowcroft, and Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney—must have the defect of its virtues. The utter mess made of the coup that some Panamanian officers tried to stage against Manuel Noriega last October was illustrative. "That fiasco showed up a cozy, personalized system that didn't work, because it hadn't been organized in a way that allowed it to react to a fast-breaking crisis," a senior diplomat says. "The machinery was not and is not oiled. George Bush was sitting there trying to evaluate raw intelligence instead of seeing a coördinated intelligence product. He was operating as the desk man on Panama, not the President."

Like many successful executives, Baker cannot cope with the whole menu of problems at the same time. Like many successful executives, he concentrates his energies. In his short time at State, East-West issues and the Middle East have headed his agenda (aside from the Nicaraguan accord). Even before Bush's inauguration, it seemed that he and Baker might actually be serious about pushing for agreement on the Palestine question. Baker worried the Israelis, because he seemed aloof. Egypt's President Hosni

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Probably. I see them leaving their offices.
By seven they are turning smartly into the drive
To spend the evening with small patterns and odd,
Oblique fixtures. Authentic what? Did I say,
Or more likely did you ask, is there any
Deliverance from any of this? Why yes,
One boy says, one can step for a moment
Out into the hall. Spells bring some relief
And antique shrieking into the night
That was not here before, not like this.
This is only a stand-in for the more formal,
More serious side of it. There is partial symmetry here.
Later one protests: How did we get here
This way, unable to stop communicating?
And is it all right for the children to listen
For the weeds slanting inward, for the cold mice
Until dawn? Now every yard has its tree,
Every heart its valentine, and only we
Don't know how to occupy the tent of night
So that what must come to pass shall pass.

—John Ashbery

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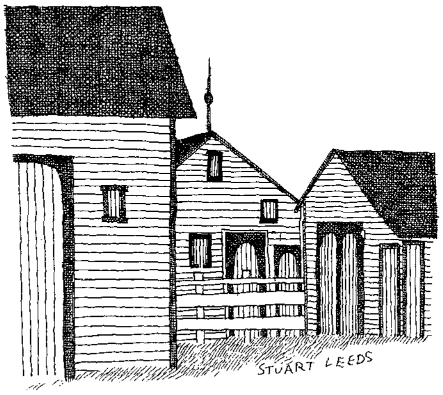
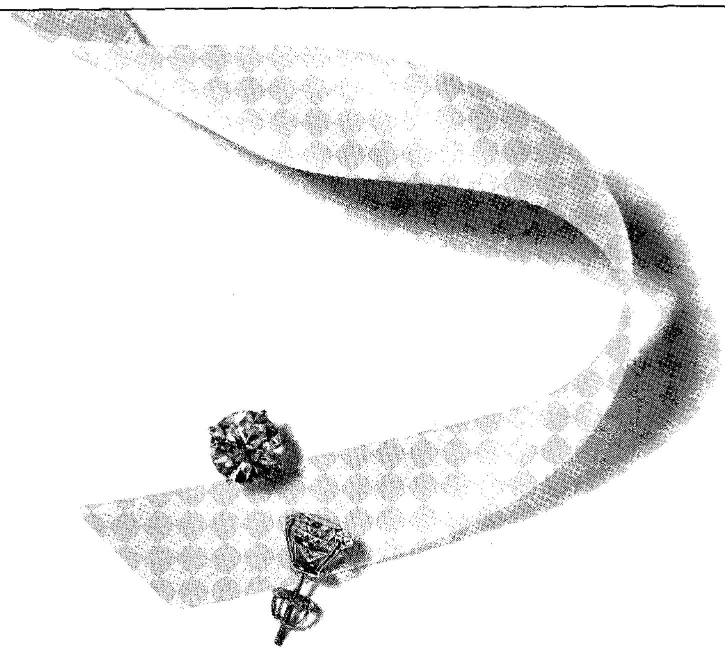


Mubarak was the first official visitor, and Bush had already put the Israelis on notice that the status quo on the West Bank was intolerable. In May, Baker addressed the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee. He broke no new ground, but the language was tough. "For Israel, now is the time to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel," he said. "Forswear annexation. Stop settlement activity. . . . Reach out to the Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights." The speech went down badly with much of the audience, and I asked what it had meant politically.

"We have a better chance of biting the bullet than anyone has in the past," a senior Administration official said. "The Israelis never had an Administration with which they were more totally in synch than Reagan's. George Bush worked hard at trying to get a significant portion of Jewish support, but, even coming off the Reagan experience, he didn't succeed. Now Bush is secure for the nomination in '92, and if he couldn't get Jewish support after Reagan, well . . . So you see, he may have more independence than his predecessors. And Israel is losing the public-opinion battle because of the *intifada*"—the Arab uprising on the West Bank.

In East-West matters, Baker got off to a bad start with his own professionals, and the fault was at least as much theirs as his. His first trip abroad—in early February of 1989—was a visit to fifteen North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries in eight days. Baker didn't know much, and it showed; there was some sniping from European capitals. However, his political instincts told him that the position he was carrying on the outstanding issue of the day—short-range nuclear weapons—was a hopeless nonstarter politically. State's specialists, strongly backed by many of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's, in Whitehall, wanted West Germany to allow deployment there of a modernized tactical nuclear weapon called Lance. For a long list of reasons, the Germans were unwilling to accept yet another nuclear device. The politician in Baker saw that much after being exposed for a few hours to fellow-members of the trade—Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. "Baker had a bad first trip to Europe because he inherited a lousy



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position from the bureaucracy on short-range nuclear forces," says an American diplomat who worked on the problem. Baker also discovered that although Genscher was the pivotal influence on German foreign policy, Washington had been bypassing him and dealing mainly with Kohl's aides, because their line was more congenial. Baker put a stop to that, and developed a good rapport with Genscher.

On the larger issue of relations with Moscow, the Administration's performance over the first several months was strangely inept and defensive. Bush and his entourage felt that Reagan had swung from an excessively hard line, born of zeal, to a naïvely soft line, born of exposure to one man—Gorbachev. Bush set out to plant his policy in the firmer stuff of prudence and patience. Nothing need be done in a hurry. If Gorbachev was in a hurry and trying to stay ahead of one disaster or another, the problem was his, and was hardly within the gift of any outside power to affect, even if it wanted to. What Bush and Baker wanted was to know whether Gorbachev and his foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, were "for real," as it was put. Moscow's so-called new thinking would have to be tested, Baker said on the eve of his first trip there in May. After this trip, Baker gradually became aware that policy toward Gorbachev would have to become less wary and more responsive—that the world was indeed beginning to change in some fundamental way. On July 29th, Baker met with Shevardnadze at a conference in Paris that was supposed to find a solution for Cambodia's tormented affairs. Their tête-à-tête lasted nearly three hours, and was devoted wholly to a discussion of internal Soviet problems. Baker was deeply impressed by Shevardnadze's candor in explaining their nature and scale. If he hadn't known it already, he found that Shevardnadze, too, had a political weight that foreign ministers rarely possess. When Baker was reminded that some of his colleagues doubted whether Gorbachev would survive, he said, "It's still foolish not to try when United States interests also benefit. We should seek points of mutual advantage and do as much as we can. The risk is that we wait too long—sit on our duff. One thing we can do is provide a stable international environment."

The Soviets are relieved that Bush and Baker have shown an understanding of their internal problems, and that they haven't tried to exploit the revolution in Eastern Europe or the harsh dilemma posed by Lithuania. Reacting with caution to a cascade of astonishing events is obviously desirable, but what happens when the cascade ceases and the problem becomes one of instability and basket-case economies? As East Europeans tire of smashing Red icons and pursuing secret policemen, they must find ways of avoiding political and economic chaos—of governing themselves. An Administration that won't do much about pressing domestic needs isn't likely to do much for Poland and Romania. Baker's comment on America's being able to "provide a stable international environment" has a hollow ring.

BAKER cannot consider a run at the Presidency in 1996 unless he distinguishes himself at State, and that means helping George Bush run his own foreign policy. In a sense, Baker is where Bush used to be—operating in the shadow of another's authority. He may feel, as Bush did, that to be a figure in his own right will require a move to the White House; otherwise, he could be remembered only as a first-rate chief of staff and a man with a great résumé. Baker takes strong exception to the idea that he harbors such thoughts. "I will be sixty-six years old at the end of the Bush Presidency," he says. (That is three years younger than Ronald Reagan was when he became President.) "If the President is reelected and wants me to stay and I do, I'll have had sixteen years of these high-pressure jobs by then." When I observed that most of those who know him best think he will have a try, he said, "I'm not going to do it. You and I will meet in 1996 so I can say 'I told you so.' "

Baker would have sounded more convincing if it had not been for his answer to a question about whether he had enjoyed the retail end of campaigning—the barbecues and assorted nonsense—when he ran for attorney general of Texas, in 1978. "I didn't mind that at all," he said. "I enjoyed it, in fact." Everyone I spoke with in Houston and Austin, however, felt that he hadn't been at all comfortable in that role. And everyone, including his wife, Susan, said that he had disliked raising money for himself. Yet by Baker's own account he liked even that part.

After saying in response to a question that he would not return to an active law practice, Baker told me, "I might affiliate with a firm. I'd like to discover the ranch and enjoy my grandchildren." A year or so ago, he bought a fifteen-hundred-acre ranch in the Wind River Range, in western Wyoming. Baker clearly loves this rugged property, and would like to spend more time there. One of his close Houston friends has no opinion on whether Baker wants to be President. Another friend, William Lummis, doubts it. "I hunt with the man, fish with him, and we talk, and I've never detected any interest on his side in becoming President," Lummis says. Within a wide circle of other friends, former associates, and assorted political figures with whom I spoke, everyone else felt strongly that Baker did want to be President; most of them felt that his chances of being a viable candidate were good—some said excellent. The only other professed naysayer that I've met is Susan Baker. She says, "He's never felt as if he wanted to run for President. Unlike George Bush, it has never been a goal with him. It's just something he isn't going to do. He'll never stop working, but there is a lot of life after Washington. Wyoming is the light at the end of the tunnel." But she was quoted in *Time*, less than a month after Bush's Inauguration, as saying, "Jimmy has a tremendous ambition and drive to reach the top. . . . Right now, he's got to be the best Secretary of State he can. The rest may come from that later."

No one has run for the Presidency from the State Department since John Quincy Adams did so (and won), in 1824. And Baker isn't likely to do so, either. Baker watchers in Washington reckon that he'll resign a year or so into Bush's second term (if there is one) and set about running—provided that at that time he can point to some concrete achievements at State. Baker would then be expected to begin addressing foreign-affairs councils around the country—not just the big ones but those in middle-sized cities. And Republican precinct chairmen from everywhere within a hundred miles or so would be invited to attend. He would also be addressing Lincoln Day dinners and campaigning for Republican officeholders and aspirant of-

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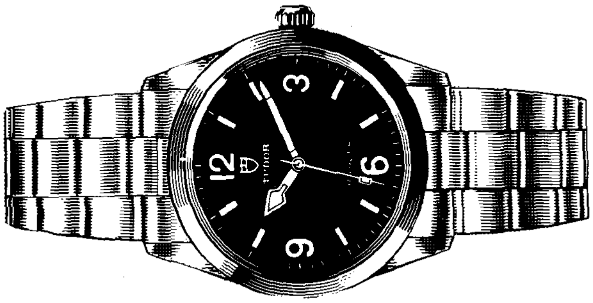

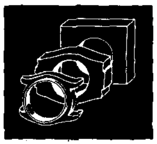

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ficeholders. These are dues that he has yet to pay.

Baker has no political base, and isn't likely to try to acquire one by returning to Texas to run for the United States Senate. He would have to run for Lloyd Bentsen's seat in 1994, and that is too soon, or for Phil Gramm's seat in 1996; that would be too late, and it's just not conceivable that Baker would covet the role of junior senator. Nor does anyone expect him to consider running for governor of Texas. He might not win, and the growing problems of the state would almost surely becloud any incumbent's Presidential ambitions.

"He doesn't have to go back to Texas," John Sears says. "You don't need a base any longer. That is old style. What is mainly needed now is name recognition, and Baker will have it. He will also have that terrific résumé. Also, no one out there is a threat, and it will take time for someone elected in 1992, or even in 1990, to fill out politically and threaten Baker. Whoever it might be would have to emerge fast."

The clearest track to the nomination would be a run from the office of Vice-President. And there Baker would have plenty of time for paying party dues. Dan Quayle was chosen in large part to please the far right. The more he was mocked by the press during the campaign, the better the hard right liked him. But his approval rating in the polls has remained at a very low level for a very long time. Quayle hasn't caught on; he is therefore of no great use to the hard right, and some politicians reckon that he is vulnerable and will not be on the ticket in 1992. This seems to be a minority view—so far, anyway. Most Republicans I've talked to expect Quayle to remain. "It would take a sin of major proportions for Bush to push him off," a senior Administration official says. "Bush's code of honor will cause him to keep Quayle." Bush may also regard Quayle's standing in the polls as of no importance. He won with him last time, and may feel that he can do so again.

Still, those among the skeptics who are closest to the situation do not wholly rule out the bumping of Quayle. "If a change were to be made, Baker would not want anyone else to replace Quayle," Sears says. "Quayle suits him very well as a second-term V.P., because he is no competition."

"Baker as Veep would put his relationship with Bush to the ultimate test," says a friend and former associate of both. "Also, there's a lot of difference between them. Bush loves working the crowd. Not Baker. His skills at dealing with people are enormous, but at a different—higher—level. And running for President as Vice-President is deadly. Bush discovered that." The job itself is deadly, as Bush also discovered. But he and Baker might find a way of making it a real job—for example, by perhaps allowing the Vice-President in this case to serve also as national-security adviser.

The Constitution frowns on a national ticket headed by candidates from the same state. A Bush-Baker ticket would oblige one of them to change his voting residence, or else the ticket might have to forfeit the electoral votes of Texas. Bush would be unlikely to leave Texas. He has tentatively decided to establish his Presidential library there, probably in Houston, and he has told various people that he would not change his voting residence. Baker would be the more likely to make such a change—from Texas to Wyoming, if it ever came to that. Or, he might move from Washington to the Virginia suburbs so as to help obtain that state's electoral votes. However, any such gambit might be considered too clever by half and hence misfire politically.

The more likely possibility would be for Baker to do nothing after leaving government except run for President. In Houston, Andrews Kurth would love to have him return and become a "rainmaker"; he'd have an office there, and plenty of time to run. But Baker isn't likely to use the offices of a law firm for that purpose, and if he did the firm would be Baker & Botts.

Not everyone agrees that Baker would be a good candidate. He has plenty of name recognition—just as, say, Lee Iacocca does—but he has no political identity in the ideological sense. His party doesn't know where he stands on issues. Bush had that problem, and would probably have lost the nomination if he had not been Vice-President. Baker and Bush are attracted to the process of government, not to goals. Ronald Reagan was interested only in goals; as for the process, he would say, "The fellas will take care of that." Some Republicans feel that either Jack Kemp or Phil Gramm would be a stronger candidate than Baker. Each is considered an idea man with a strong ideological edge.

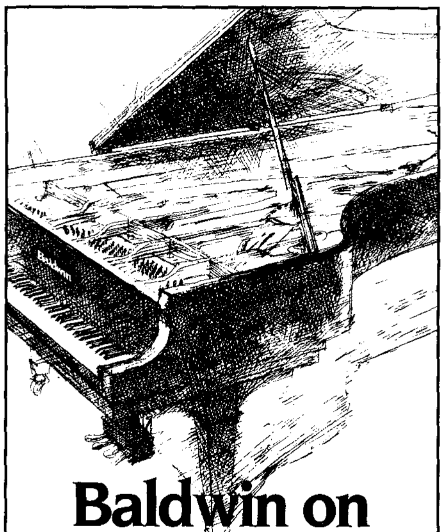
One Baker watcher compares him with Mario Cuomo, saying, "They look at themselves and each knows that he measures up as a candidate for President in terms of experience, knowledge, and ability. But each has his difficulties—deep caution and reserve, along with a sense of vulnerability, on Cuomo's part, and the absence of any sort of political base, in Baker's case."

Baker raised eyebrows around Washington last February by giving what is known as "Christian witness" at the National Prayer Breakfast; he rose and described his personal journey of faith. To have taken this step, as Mary McGrory, the columnist, noted, "was utterly out of character for the secretary, who is as reserved as he is hard-nosed." A cynical town saw Baker as trying to create an identity to which a largish portion of his party, notably its right wing, could relate. His indistinct doctrinal hue might in the end not be a problem for him. The mantra of the right is likely to lose resonance, with the result that political figures will be less vulnerable to pressure from fringe groups, however well organized. The direction of the abortion issue tends to support this view. Also, fortune may once again smile on Baker: he is likely to leave the State Department as the first of its Secretaries in the postwar era who was not in one way or another damaged by the Cold War. Still, he has potential liabilities. The past could work against as well as for him if the economy were to turn sour at a politically awkward moment. Baker would be recalled as having served in both the White House and the Treasury Department when the huge budget deficit developed. It's also true, though, that any Republican Presidential candidate would probably fare badly in the wake of a recession.

When Baker leaves State, he will have a large menu of options. He could take charge of some large investment bank with global reach, or perhaps the World Bank. If he wanted to return to Houston, he could probably run the Texas Commerce Bank (but might not want to, despite its strong Baker-family associations). Ben Love, a major Houston figure, who retired as the chairman of the bank last December, built an office for Baker several years ago that adjoined his own and was identical in every detail to his. "On a couple of occasions while he was chief of staff in the White House and was totally worn out, he came up and looked at this office," Love says. "We had an understanding then that if he left and returned to the private sector his first conversation would be with Texas Commerce. That office has never been occupied." Love's idea had been for Baker to become president of the bank and then succeed him as chairman.

Baker now works from a sofa instead of a desk, in a small room that adjoins the Secretary's large, ornamental office. At sixty, he seems for the most part unmarked by the years and the high-pressure jobs. His trim, though sturdily built, figure looks as if it had neither gained nor lost an ounce over the decades; the even planes of his alert face remain youthful. By every account, he enjoys being Secretary of State. He liked his last job, too, but budget and currency-exchange issues do not compare with those involving war and peace, which America can influence more than any other country can. "I've never seen him happier, more content with himself, than he is now," says Preston Moore. Mary Bonner Baker, Jim and Susan Baker's daughter, who is twelve, is a large presence in his life, and receives the kind of careful thought that his sons were denied, or so they felt. Although Baker is a very sociable man, he has no social life in Washington, and he prefers it that way. He usually arrives home from the office at about nine in the evening, at which point, Susan Baker says, "he'll have a beer, eat supper, and collapse." His friends are in Houston, but they are likely to see less of him, because the ranch in Wyoming will preëmpt much of the time he doesn't spend at his job in Washington, whatever that may be.

THE competitive instinct and the habit of competition are part of the essential Baker. He will almost certainly compete for the Presidency, which, as he knows, at least as well as anyone, is the only job in Washington that is wholly worth striving for. As usual, Baker is in the right place at the right time. He is well aware that his friend the President will shun the tougher challenges—the budget defi-



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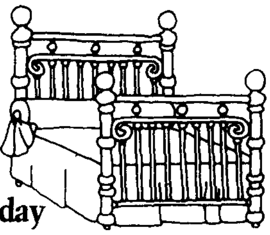

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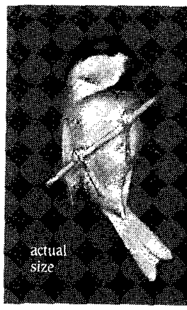

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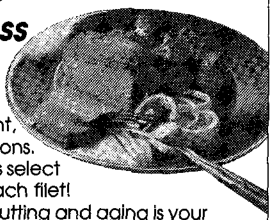

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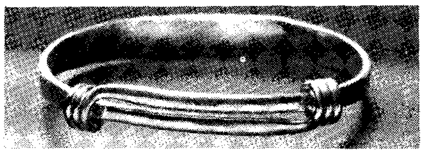

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cit, the education deficit, the infrastructure deficit—and devote himself to the more alluring challenges abroad, most of which are politically cost-free. The good news and the nice surprises of Bush's Administration emerge from his foreign policy, and will continue to do so unless the domestic agenda presents him with an actual crisis.

Neither Bush nor Baker is a candidate for the Republican Party's hagiography, or likely to become one. Whether either earns a place in the country's lasting good opinion is an imponderable. Bush is remarkably popular, but he doesn't take steps that many other leaders would regard as essential: he won't sacrifice any of his current popularity in order to secure a hard core of support that will stay put in bad times as well as good. He gives the country what he thinks it wants, not what it needs. Baker resembles Bush in some ways. If, like Bush, he sets a course for the White House and manages to get there, much would be expected of a man with the best résumé around. But the chemistry of the Oval Office and any occupant of it cannot be predicted. Baker might be very good in a crisis: the sharp instinct for action which he possesses would allow him to see all the possibilities open to the office of President in a dramatic, fast-breaking situation. Add to instinct his skills, experience, and energy, and one can imagine a Baker Presidency as being more thematic and less rhetorical than Bush's. But the country's real problems are deep and long-term, and they seem to defy solutions that are not politically contentious. It isn't clear that Baker would be any more willing than Bush to tackle them frontally. On his form to date, Baker is as risk-averse as he is competitive. —JOHN NEWHOUSE

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Fried Sugar Balls

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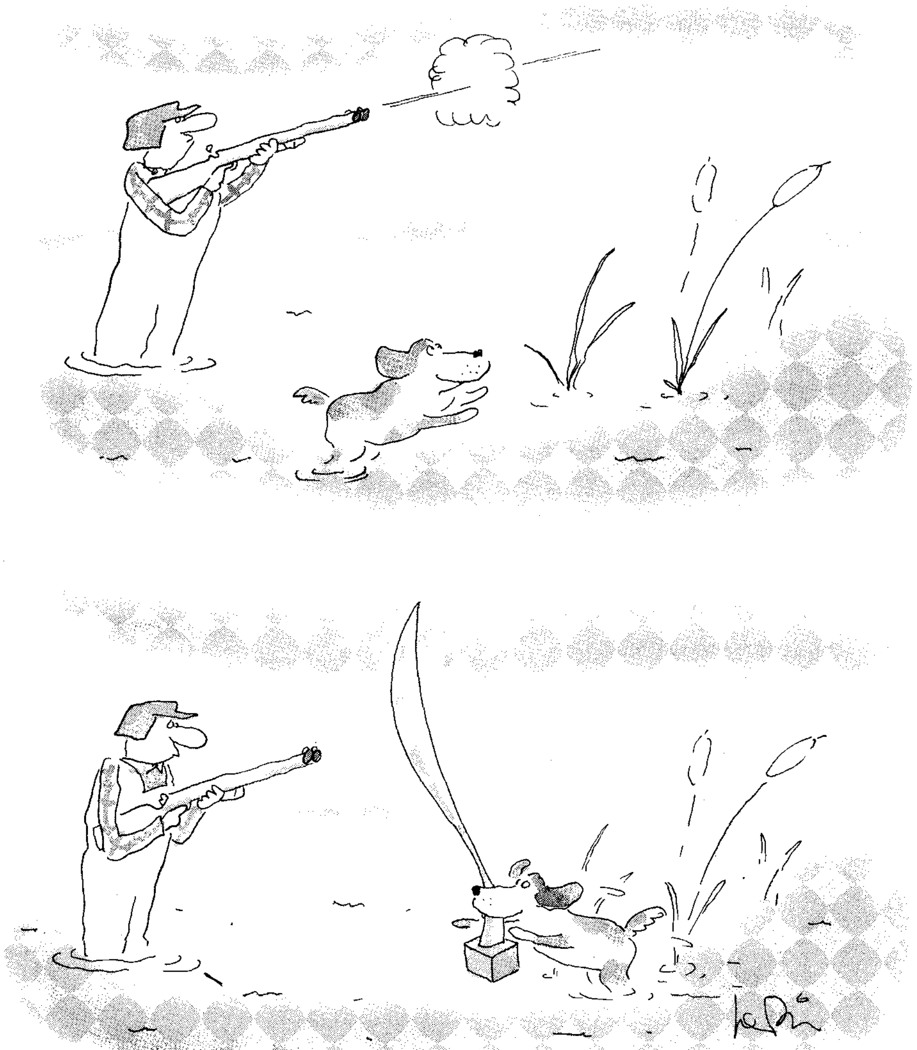
Hurston & Wolfe

THERE is no natural affinity, you'd think, between Zora Neale Hurston, turbulent storyteller—first of the Deep South and later of the Harlem Renaissance, in the twenties—and George C. Wolfe, theatrical necromancer at the Crossroads Theatre, in New Brunswick, N.J., and author and director of the stunning "The Colored Museum," of a couple of seasons ago. Yet Mr. Wolfe has adapted three stories by Miss Hurston—translated them, actually, into jazz and blues—giving them a powerful injection of irony and wit, which in no way diffuses their rage. Mr. Wolfe's mordant humor and his teeming invention are all his own, and if an award were to be given for the most stylish show of the season, his "Spunk," at the Public, should be among the top candidates. The stories are framed by two jazz singers—Chic Street Man, a guitarist and composer, and handsome Ann Duquesnay—who move and mingle with the actors. In each of the stories, the narrative is strong, though minimal, and the words (which are Hurston's and which Wolfe's I cannot tell you) are rich and plentiful; their idioms from down there and up here are always fascinating. A Harlem glossary, by the way, is provided in the program, but I doubt you'll need it, the actors are so eloquent.

In "Story in Harlem Slang," the second, and funniest, of the sketches, a pair of dudes (K. Todd Freeman and Reggie Montgomery) without two dimes to rub together try to con a smart young woman (Danitra Vance) out of some money, with no success. Imitating spiffy pimps, they strut and dance in unison, all the while treating us to a local rap that is endlessly delightful. The first sketch, "Sweat," is a study in marital hatred, in which the brutish husband (Mr. Montgomery) of a laundress (Miss Vance) first tramples all over the white folks' clothes that are cluttering the house, and then tortures her by bringing home a rattlesnake. "The Gilded Six-Bits" tells the story of a loving husband and wife whose marriage almost comes apart when the wife cannot forgive herself for a brief moment of infidelity. Happy ending, with radiant performances by Miss Vance (in the third of three sharply contrasting roles) and Kevin Jackson.

The songs of Chic Street Man, the choreography by Hope Clarke, the sets by Loy Arcenas, as lighted by Don Holder, the costumes by Toni-Leslie James, and the performances by all present enhance every moment of "Spunk." What a terrible title for a beautiful show!

IN "Truly Blessed: A Musical Celebration of Mahalia Jackson," at the Longacre, Queen Esther Marrow, a pretty singer with a pleasant voice and a pleasing mien, has fashioned a pleasant, bland evening out of the artistry, beauty, and religious passion of Miss Jackson, and it just isn't enough. The evening proceeds episode by episode, and gospel song by gospel song; clapping in the audience is encouraged. The four backup singers are so good, however, that they need no encouragement, just appreciation. Carl Hall is a tall, handsome tenor; Doug Eskew, here making his Broadway début, has a natural falsetto; Lynette G. DuPré (another débutante) and Gwen Stewart are the decorative and entertaining ladies. Onstage, everything goes well, under Robert Kalfin's direction. The accompanying musicians, all fine, are Aaron Graves, pianist and conductor; Konrad (Cheesecake) Adderly, bass; Brian Grice, drums; and Willard Meeks, organ. The show itself was conceived and written by Queen Esther. —EDITH OLIVER



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MUSICAL EVENTS

Music Theatre

THE *Händel-Renaissance* began in Göttingen in 1920, with a production of "Rodelinda," and spread swiftly through Germany. In 1924, Karlsruhe staged the first revival of "Tamerlano" since 1731, and the city continued to be an important Handel center. Since 1978, it has mounted a new Handel production annually; in 1985, its *Händel-Tage* grew to a spring Handel Festival, with the new production, revivals, concerts, an international scholarly conference, and master classes in Baroque performance. The city's neoclassical Court Theatre was destroyed in 1944; the company plays in a 1975 theatre with ample public spaces and two auditoriums, the larger holding about a thousand, the other three hundred and fifty. On a three-day visit to Karlsruhe this year, I saw "Admeto," "Imeneo," and "Belshazzar." The pasticcio "Oreste," which Handel concocted in 1734, was due a few days later.

One of the conference topics was "Handel's opera seria and contemporary *Regie-Theater*" (or "director's opera"), and one of the main speakers was Jean-Louis Martinoty, who directed most of the Karlsruhe Handel productions in the early eighties, and who, while head of the Paris Opera, engaged Nicholas Hytner to stage the crisp, elegant "Giulio Cesare" that was remounted in Houston last year. "Irony" was a recurrent word in the discussions; it seemed to mean something like casting a quizzical eye on Handel's dramas and on the exaggerated claims now sometimes made for them. At the 1985 festival, which included revivals of "Rinaldo," "Cesare," and "Serse," the new production was "Pasticcio," a confection that Mr. Martinoty and Jean-Claude Malgoire had spun from twenty-three different Handel operas—a practical challenge to those who proclaim the works' dramatic integrity. I am told that the result, while entertaining, threw the firm construction of the real Handel operas into relief. Perhaps that is what the compilers intended. Irony—in the simple sense of not taking Handel quite seriously—can assume many forms. It marked not only the Met's merely decorative productions of "Rinaldo" and "Cesare," and the Juilliard's frilly "Serse," but also the City Opera's "modern" staging of "Alcina," directed by Andrei Serban, with its chorus of crocodiles in tuxedos. None of them showed much concern for the score and the drama that Handel composed. Blazing belief in the composer's power can likewise manifest itself in various forms, in manners as different as those of the "Teseo" and the "Cesare" that were presented at Purchase in 1985. The "Teseo" was a thoroughgoing essay, directed by Nicholas McGegan, in historical reconstruction. The "Cesare" was a staging, by Peter Sellars, in a contemporary Near East setting. And both of them were cogent, musically intact, and exciting. There is no single right way of bringing Handel's operas to life on the modern stage; each show must be judged by its achievement, not according to a preconception that "historical" or "modern" is best.

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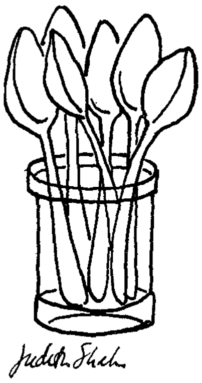
R. Chast

"Admeto," this year's new Karlsruhe production, done in the big house, was directed by Heinz Balthes, who has designed the Karlsruhe Handel shows since 1978 and now joins the long list of operatic designers—Zeffirelli, Ponnelle, Pizzi, Karl-Ernst Herrmann—who take up staging as well. (For many of the results, "designer's opera," or "opera for the eye," might be a term more appropriate than "director's opera.") This "Admeto" was handsome, but it seemed to be a drama about an enormous, stage-spanning bed, yards and yards of rippling parachute silk, elaborate robes and cloaks donned and doffed. Concern for Alcestis' and Admetus' emotions was subordinate to the actors' manipulation of their costumes and their interactions with the ingenious scenery. "Imeneo," designed by Balthes (after Watteau, but all in white) and directed by Wolfgang Quetes, was more engaging, for all that the staging was too larky and busy for my taste. The execution was deft; the core of serious emotion was not spurned; and the “operetta” (as such it was first billed, in 1740) does contain what Anthony Hicks has called “satirical edges . . . one turned against the conventions of the form, the other at *la donna mobile*.”

The casts combined guest specialists and members of the regular company. Both operas were conducted by Charles Farncombe, the musical leader of Karlsruhe Handel since 1980 and before that, for twenty-five years, of London’s Handel Opera Society. He has been an active participant in the transformations of our day: the abandonment of octave transpositions in the casting, the adoption of fuller and more accurate texts, the use of period instruments. He has a thorough trust in and understanding of Handel, a sure sense of pace, and a way of urging Puccini singers along stylish Handelian paths. The “Admeto” recitatives, I thought, were still rather slow—except those of Graham Pushee (the Trasimedes), a vivid and incisive countertenor. Paul Esswood sang the title role with refined art and tones but too little passion. “Imeneo,” in the small house, moved more trimly, and again a countertenor—Jean Nirouet, as Tirinthus—was outstanding, with his strong, true tones and imaginative, if sometimes extravagant, approach to phrases. The band was the Deutsche Händel-Solisten.



“Belshazzar” is an oratorio oft staged in Germany. The Karlsruhe version, put on by Andreas Baumann, looked promising to start with: an uncluttered set stretching back from a toy-town model of besieged Babylon. But when the Babylonian chorus, elaborately choreographed, shimmied on in party dress, clutching glasses and throwing streamers, one’s heart sank; and this proved to be one of those let’s-do-something, anything-goes productions, coherent only in the director’s program-note account of it. Conducted by Gert Bahner, it was musically heavy, clumsily sung (except by Mr. Pushee, as Daniel), and much abridged.

A good concert was given by the Deutsche Händel-Solisten, conducted by Roy Goodman. Ann Monoyios was the soloist in the cantata “Silete venti” and in “Gentle Morpheus,” from the “Alceste” incidental music. The Clare College Choir gave radiant accounts of two coronation anthems.

STAGING operas is a costly business. Concert performances imbued with some dramatic elements—such as the 1985 “Belshazzar” in Tully Hall and last year’s touring “Orlando” from the Academy of Ancient Music, in Fisher Hall—can help to fill Handelian holes. This year, Tafelmusik, Toronto’s Baroque band, planned to present the Canadian and American premières of “Floridante” in semistaged form, but illness and travel mishaps upset the rehearsal schedule, and when I saw the “Floridante” in Berkeley it was pretty well a straight concert performance. But a good one. “Floridante” is a pleasing opera. The plot derives from a seventeenth-century Venetian libretto, cast in a customary fashion for two pairs of young lovers and an older tyrant in love with one of the women. (The customary Venetian moment of titillation comes when the tyrant makes amorous advances to his supposed daughter.) Handel’s librettist, Paolo Rolli, moved the action from Norway to the Lebanon—Gustavus became Orontes—and omitted the traditional comic-servant scenes. “Floridante” is not composed in the grand heroic manner of its predecessors, “Radamisto” and Handel’s act of the three-composer “Muzio Scevola.” Perhaps Handel by being lighter and less learned sought to recapture public favor, which had been tipping toward his rival Bononcini. The opera contains much excellent and some touching music.

Alan Curtis, at a harpsichord, led a sensitive performance. His edition included a few pages unheard before. In mid-composition, Handel learned that the soprano Margherita Durastanti, whom he intended for his heroine, Elmira, would not be arriving in London. The seconda donna, Anastasia Robinson, was promoted to prima; music already composed was lowered for her, and the role was completed in her register. The high soprano Maddalena Salvai took over Robinson’s original role, Roxane, and the music for her

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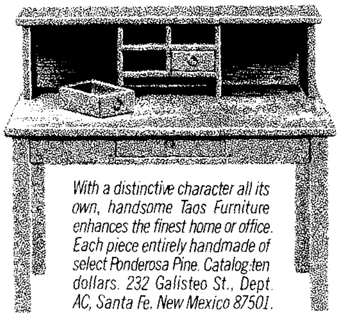

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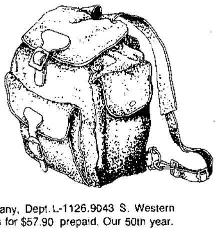


was similarly adapted or newly composed. But because Mr. Curtis's prima donna, Zehava Gal, has a wide compass, she "created" the higher Elmira music written for Durastanti and continued with Robinson's. In Act III, however, she transposed Elmira's first aria up a tone and replaced the second, "Sì, coronar" (which, as Winton Dean remarks, "tends to trundle"), with the famous "Dopo notte"—a showpiece composed for the castrato Carestini, in "Ariodante," thirteen years after "Floridante." Mixed feelings about that. One can pretend that "Dopo notte"—on a verbal level, at least—"resolves" Elmira's mysterious, lovely B-flat-minor "Notte cara" in Act II, a high point of the score (and sung by Miss Gal with intensity and beauty). One can approve key consistency in that both "Sì, coronar" and "Dopo notte" are in D major, in which key "Floridante" also closes. But even listeners unaware of what was happening must have heard the extended, heroic "Dopo notte" as something quite different from anything else in the evening, something that breaks through the "Floridante" frame. If Handel had really written it there, we would perhaps be acclaiming it as a stroke of genius. But whither do such improvements by replacement—of a weak aria by a stronger one from another work—lead? To those once current versions of Mozart's "Idomeneo" and "Clemenza di Tito" in which each score holds hit numbers from the other? To Martinoty's "Pasticcio"? As I said, mixed feelings, and each show judged on its achievement. Miss Gal wowed the audience with a stunning account of Ariodante's "Dopo notte."

For the rest, there was a cast of clear, accomplished Canadian principals of international renown: Catherine Robbin in the Senesino title role, Nancy Argenta as Roxane, and Ingrid Attrot as her lover, Timantes. Tafelmusik is not my favorite Baroque band; it seems to me to prefer cool all-purpose near-proficiency to eager, audacious engagement with a particular work. But Mr. Curtis stirred at least some of its soloists to eloquence. The Berkeley performance was given in Zellerbach Hall, an unresonant concrete bunker—which, I regret to see, is also to house the Jommelli opera, "La Schiava Liberata," that Mr. Curtis conducts at Berkeley's early-music festival next month. Berkeley has better homes for music.

Carnegie Hall's latest presentation in its Jerome Kern series was "The Cat and the Fiddle," a 1931 musical of merit. It was given a short, six-performance run in Weill Recital Hall. The work has a more coherent, less silly libretto, by Otto Harbach, than, for all its attractions, last year's Kern show, "Sitting Pretty" (with a book by Guy Bolton and lyrics by P. G. Wodehouse). The plot is kin to that of the "Ariadne auf Naxos" prologue: an artistic clash but personal click between practitioners of high and of popular art. In Harbach's version, the Zerbinetta figure is Shirley Sheridan, an American songwriter, the composer of the catchy "She Didn't Say 'Yes,'" and the Komponist is Victor Florescu, the composer of the equally catchy "The Breeze Kissed Your Hair." As it were, the manners of Kern's peppy, rhythmic American musicals and of Emmerich Kálmán's lilting, sentimental Austro-Hungarian operettas compete—as once on Broadway they did—for popular favor, and from their loving conjunction a hit is born. "The Cat and the Fiddle" came after "Show Boat," but in its intimacy it recalls Kern's early Princess Theatre compositions.

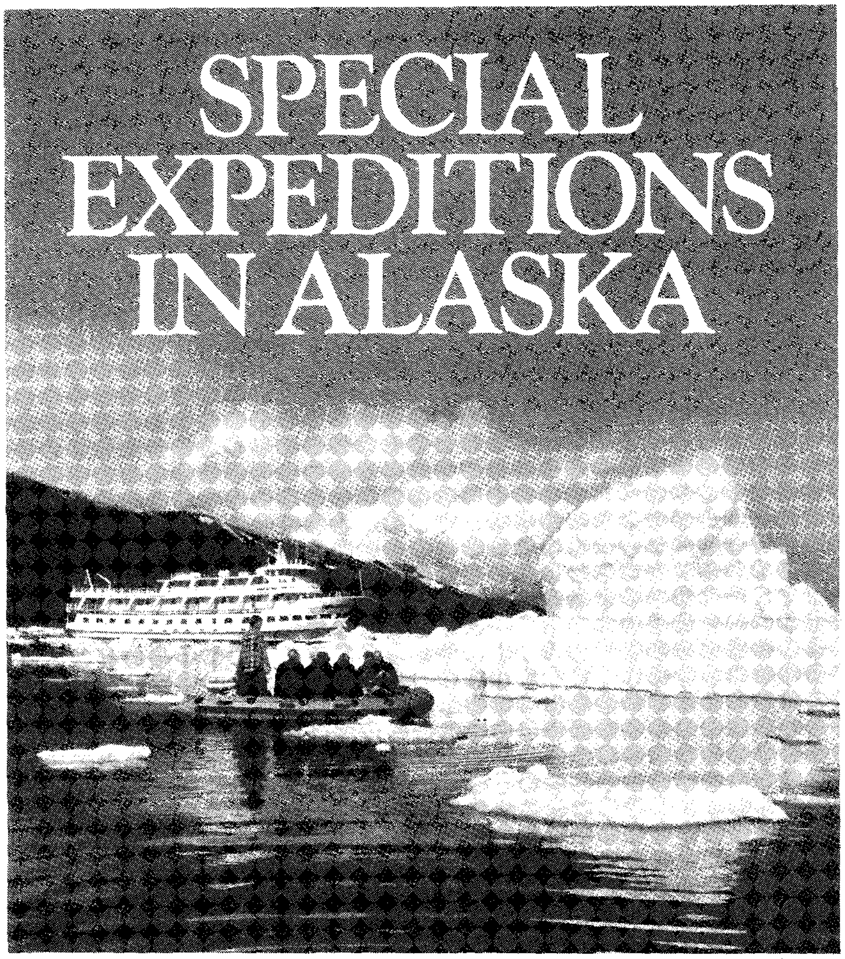
It is a joy to hear musicals once again unamplified, sounding from real voices. Weill holds two hundred and sixty-eight people, about thirty fewer than the Princess Theatre held. John McGlinn, who conducted an expert twenty-player orchestra, showed an uncommon ability to set and sustain the right tempi, and to let voices through without slighting the wizardry of Robert Russell Bennett's (newly recovered) orchestration. Perhaps the Met should engage him for some Mozart. Judy Kaye, one of America's most delightful and verbally alert sopranos, was a sparkling Shirley. Davis Gaines, although hampered on the first night by flu, was a romantic Victor. Angelina Réaux gave a clever account of Odette, the Other Woman. Scores were used, but Cris Groenendaal, the Street Singer, was the only member of the cast who seemed still book-bound. Paige O'Hara, Ruth Golden, Maureen Brennan, Richard Woods, Leo Leyden, and Paul V. Ames in "large-type" roles and Brian Gow, Lydia Mila, Olga Talyn, Christine Abraham, Jeff

Mattsey, and Burr Cochran Phillips in smaller ones must all be mentioned: the whole company, whether singing or speaking, projected the piece with high spirits, grace, and charm.

THE first offering of this year's American Music Theatre Festival, in Philadelphia, was William Bolcom's "Casino Paradise," which has a book by Arnold Weinstein and Thomas Babe, and lyrics by Weinstein. The music is lively, if metrically a shade regular and apt to be tango-ridden. The book is a mess. Act I coheres fairly well: the unscrupulous Ferguson destroys a neighborhood to build his profitable casino; his fun-loving daughter, Cis, accepts the situation; his rebellious son, Stanley, rebels, and at the first-act curtain shoots his father—not fatally. Act II becomes a muddle: Stanley, escaped from prison, somehow acquires control of his dad's business; Ferguson burns down his casino and claims that he has thereby saved his son's soul; father and son declare that they love one another after all. Through this act there drifts Ferguson's Nurse; at one point she gets into bed with him. (David Alden "conceived" the production and directed it, and at this point we have three simulated couplings onstage.) The role was taken by Joan Morris, who was vocally the most arresting member of the company, both in song and in speech. But what Nurse was up to, what role she plays in the drama, remained obscure. (I was told afterward that she represents the Angel of Death; no one could have guessed.) Equally obscure is whether or not Stanley is gay; his embraces with a bearded transvestite suggest that he is, but any consequences this may have for the central father-son relationship go unexplored. The piece has many loose ends. Within it there may lurk the germ of a decent music drama about a tycoon who, at a cost to others and to the world, makes millions more than he actually needs to live on, and begins at last to wonder why; about greed, corruption, and possible redemption.

The leads were taken by Timothy Nolen (Ferguson), Eddie Korbich (Stanley), and Janet Metz (Cis). Michael Barrett conducted a seven-player band, and the performance was given (unamplified) in the attractive little Plays and Players Theatre.

—ANDREW PORTER



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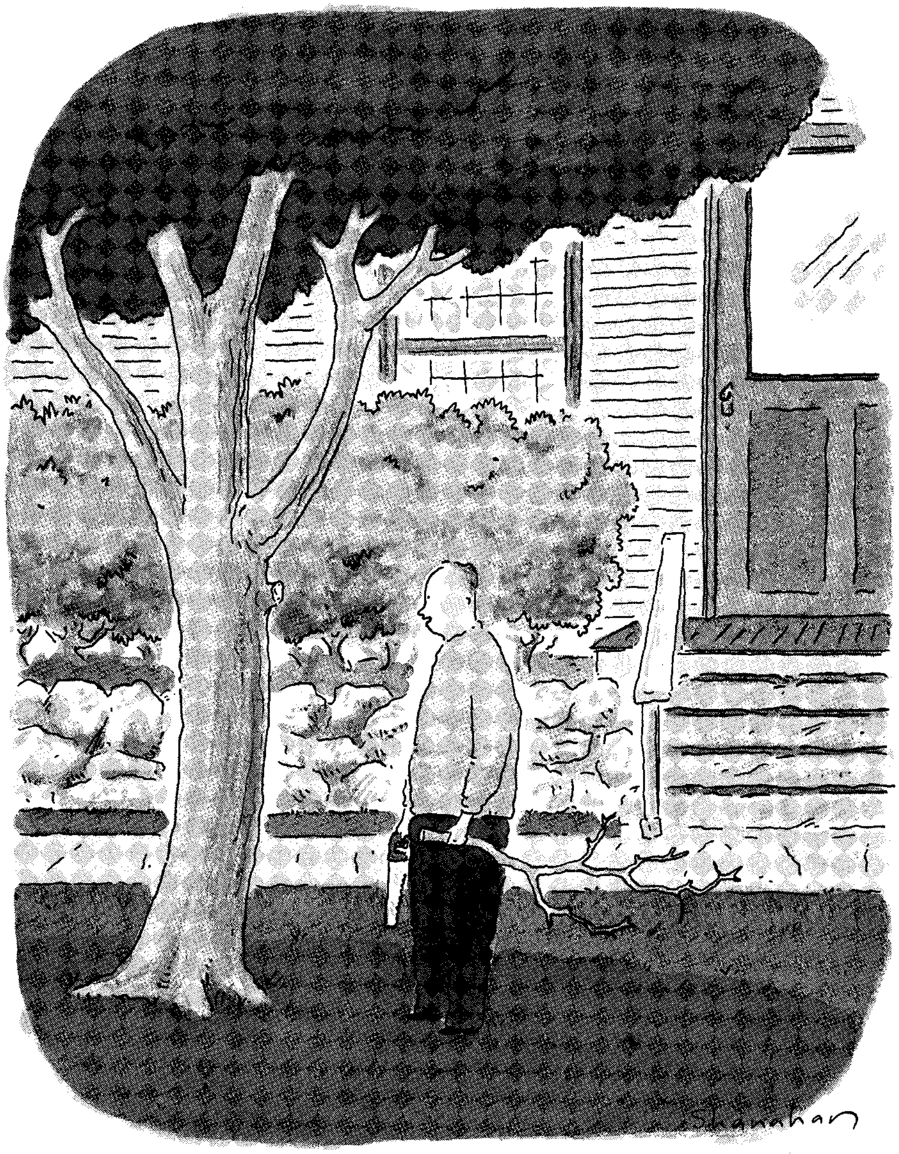
THE CURRENT CINEMA

Conspicuous Consumer

PETER GREENAWAY'S "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" is a movie about a crude British thug whose favorite method of terrorizing people is ramming things down their throats. It begins with a scene in which the bully, Albert Spica (Michael Gambon), and his henchmen smear dog shit all over the body of a naked man and then make him eat some. Later victims are force-fed shirt and trouser buttons and pages from old books. Albert eats only haute cuisine; he and his wife, Georgina (Helen Mirren), and his low-life entourage dine every night at a posh establishment called Le Hollandais. (The name of the restaurant is a dry joke: in the dining room, there's a large painting by Frans Hals of a group of officers seated around a banquet table; the arrangement of Albert's unseemly aggregation is meant to echo and parody this composition.) He fancies himself a gourmet, but he scarfs up the exquisite dishes prepared by the chef, a Frenchman (Richard Bohringer), as if they were fast-food burgers; his instinct, apparently, is to eat with his hands and save his cutlery for threatening his dinner companions. (In one scene, he sticks a fork through a woman's cheek.) Albert's vulgarity—his lack of respect for the highest achievements of European culture—is made to seem his real sin, because this is an Art Movie, refined and terribly formal; Greenaway places the barbarian smack in the middle of his "painterly" compositions, and encourages us to see him as a steaming hunk of offal desecrating the beauty of an artist's creation.



"You were very brave."

American movies about gangsters have traditionally shown at least some grudging admiration for their heroes' reckless vitality and huge material appetites—perhaps because our movies are fuelled by similar qualities. Peter Greenaway not only lacks sympathy for his protagonist's animal nature but seems offended by it. Albert is loathsome through and through, an evil lout who just does one evil, loutish thing after another for two solid hours. As a rule, bullies aren't very interesting: their dramatic functions are simple, and their appearances are brief—they barge into scenes when a quick shock or a gruesome joke is needed to jolt the audience awake, and then are hustled off until their specialized services are required again. Greenaway's camera *lingers* on Albert, feasts on his awfulness, eats him up, and the static intensity of its regard is baffling. The movie isn't probing the character's soul; as far as the filmmaker is concerned, this beast doesn't have one. And Greenaway's relentlessness isn't an indication of passion, either; we never have the sense that he's implicating himself in the horrors he shows, acknowledging a perverse attraction to his monster. His gaze is lordly, imperial—the disdainful stare that the pukka sahib directs at a servant who has inconvenienced him.

The care that Greenaway lavishes on the structure and the imagery of his films is fantastic, obsessive. But it's all manner—obsession without an object. His previous features ("The Draughtsman's Contract," "A Zed and Two Noughts," "The Belly of an Architect," and "Drowning by Numbers") were self-consciously empty—meticulous elaborations of arid little reality-and-artifice paradoxes. Greenaway seemed to be making movies with the monotonous dedication of a hobbyist, and the products of his labors were immaculate and pointless, like ships in bottles. The pictures didn't bother much with narrative, and barely even pretended to refer to anything outside themselves. "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" is no different. It gives an impression of greater consequence only because its imagery is more violent than usual and thus evokes fear and disgust—not the most enlightening emotions a movie can produce, but two more than Greenaway generally allows us to feel. The notion, suggested by several reviewers, that this movie is some kind of political allegory is absurd. Greenaway is an aesthete, and that's all he is. "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" isn't about oppression, or capitalist greed, or Margaret Thatcher; it's about the superiority of its maker's sensibility. He gives us pretty pictures to look at, and they're color-coded: the dining-room scenes are red; scenes in the restaurant's kitchen are green; scenes in the parking lot are blue; and so on. And he creates a central character whose only function is to be unworthy of the high-art splendor of his surroundings. As a critique of contemporary society, this leaves quite a bit to be desired.

Greenaway has a lot more in common with his protagonist than he thinks. He obviously regards himself as a pure artist, a virtuoso—like the haughty chef in this picture—but he's really just a cultural omnivore. (He eats for taste, not for sustenance.) His manners are no better than Albert's; he chews with his mouth open—we can identify almost every piece of art that has fed his imagination. And, for the benefit of those who are too uneducated to pick up all the references and allusions, he's willing to supply them afterward: in his interviews and writings about the film Greenaway has linked himself to Hals, Jonathan Swift, the Brothers Grimm, and Jacobean dramatists. (He doesn't mention Buñuel, whom he borrows from constantly, but perhaps he doesn't want to sully himself with a comparison to a mere filmmaker.) As a conspicuous consumer, Albert has nothing on the man who invented him.

There are many ways of being a bully; physical violence is only the most direct. Greenaway doesn't seem at all averse to other forms of power-tripping, such as intellectual intimidation. His attitude toward his characters and toward his audience is one of professorial condescension. Watching this picture is like being trapped in a nightmare art-history seminar: we sit there, cowed and miserable, as the teacher spews high-toned abstractions and dares us, smirkingly, to raise a common-sense objection—we know we'll be ridiculed if we do. In Greenaway's view, what's so unspeakable about Albert has to do less with the thug's desire to hurt and humiliate people than with the way he expresses it; his *physicality* is the crime he's convicted of (and executed for). The only thing in this movie's tidy, hermetic universe which Greenaway is unable to control, or disguise with fancy brushwork, is his loathing of the body. The beatings and the killings aren't really any uglier than the eating scenes. And the depictions of sex are pointedly grotesque. In the course of the film, Georgina takes a lover, a gentle, bookish patron of Le Hollandais named Michael (Alan Howard); he is, of course, the civilized antithesis of Albert, and the affair is clearly meant to be Georgina's chance to save herself from the everyday barbarity of her marriage. But Greenaway can't bring himself to present their romance as an idyll, even though his story's structure demands it. The lovers couple in the most degrading settings—in a lavatory stall; among plucked chickens and skinned rabbits in the kitchen—and at one point we see them huddled together, naked and filthy and shivering, in a meat van where bloody animal carcasses hang.

Despite the ornateness of the design, "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" has a very simple message: that nature—one's own appetites or other people's—is abominable, because it threatens the purity of the artist. I saw this picture in London a few months ago, and I didn't bother to review it when it opened in this country last month, because I assumed that American audiences wouldn't be any more interested in Greenaway's latest art-for-art's-sake exercise than they had been in his four previous ones. However, the Motion Picture Association of America did the movie the enormous favor of giving it an X rating (the distributors released it without a rating), and thus made Greenaway seem a kind of martyr, like Robert Mapplethorpe—a victim of repressive

Hemingway's Cap.

He probably bought his in a gas station on the road to Ketchum, next to the cash register, among the beef jerky wrapped in cellophane. Or maybe in a tackle shop in Key West.

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philistinism. (It must be a role he relishes.) Some prominent critics, flashing their anti-censorship credentials, proclaimed the movie a masterpiece, and a lot of filmgoers must feel compelled to buy a ticket as a protest against attempts to muzzle artistic expression. Also, because everyone knows by now that the movie features several gross-out scenes, including a climactic act of cannibalism, it is, in a sense, a perfect date movie for a certain audience—the intellectual's equivalent of a "Friday the 13th" picture. To sit through it with a worldly, unshockable air and then deliver a lengthy opinion about it is to display, irrefutably, one's liberal *cojones*. The movie is doing big business at the art houses.

You can hate "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover," or even ignore it completely, without lining up alongside the M.P.A.A. and Jesse Helms. What's offensive about Greenaway's picture isn't its violence or its visceral shocks but the patrician arrogance, the smug aestheticism, the snobbishness that suffuse every frame. The film's success is a ghastly joke. Greenaway probably sees this as a vindication, a delicious irony: the vulgarians who meant to torment him have instead helped him achieve a box-office hit. He has made a movie whose object is to push us to the ground and kick art in our faces. We may not feel that it's right to take revenge on him for this rude treatment. It seems sort of abject to thank him for it, though.

Pedro Almodóvar's new movie, "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!," gets off to a fast start, like a windup toy, but it runs out of momentum early, and Almodóvar, try as he may, can't figure out how to start it up again. In the opening scene, a handsome young man, Ricky (Antonio Banderas), is being released from a psychiatric hospital. The director of the institution (Lola Cardona) sends him into the world with a hilarious mixture of conventional advice and bursts of hysteria. (As she hands him some money, she says, "For your drawings, and the moments of mad pleasure you gave me.") As soon as he's out on the street, Ricky sets off in pursuit of a sexy actress named Marina (Victoria Abril), whom we meet in her dressing room as she prepares to shoot the climactic scene of "Midnight Phantom," the horror movie she's starring in; worried that a panty line will show up on camera, she reaches under her short dress, wriggles out of her underwear, and heads for the set. The director of her picture is an old man named Máximo Espejo (Francisco Rabal), who tools around in a motorized wheelchair with a rearview mirror on each side and has the hots for his leading lady. The movie they're making looks pretty ridiculous—a florid concoction about a hooded man (who, we're told, has no face) stalking a beautiful woman, whom he loves. Almodóvar seems to be having a lot of fun showing us the filming of its absurd climax, in which the heroine throws a red lasso around the phantom's neck and then, holding the rope, jumps off a balcony; the monster strangles as she swings in midair.

Soon afterward, Almodóvar tosses off a memorable dirty joke: a scene of Marina in her bathtub with a mechanized frogman toy whose madly kicking legs propel it straight to her primary erogenous zone, where it stops (still kicking, gamely). At this point, the movie seems to stop, too. Ricky, who has trailed the actress to her apartment, bursts in, subdues her with a hard slap in the face, and takes her prisoner while rambling on about his love for her. The rest of the picture (there's an hour or more to go) is devoted to the working out of the strange relationship between captor and captive. This sort of relationship has—unavoidably—a claustrophobic effect, and it doesn't bring out the best in Almodóvar, whose characteristic style is hedonistic, unfettered. The story seems to tie his wild imagination down, and his efforts to keep his (and the audience's) blood circulating betray some desperation. He leans heavily on art direction—coördinating the colors of the actors' clothes with the décor of the rooms they're stuck in. (His chromatic effects aren't as oppressive as Greenaway's, by a long shot, but they're irritating.) He gets Ricky away from Marina periodically by sending him into the streets to buy drugs for her; Ricky ties her to the bed while he's out. Every now and then, the movie cuts, almost absent-mindedly, to Máximo; these scenes are apparently intended as gestures toward thematic unity, linking Ricky's romantic obsession to both Máximo's and the Midnight Phantom's. Nothing Almodóvar tries really helps much; the movie remains stalled, inert. When Marina finally does fall in love with Ricky, we don't quite believe it, and we don't fully enjoy the perverse humor of it, either; we haven't forgotten the force of the kidnapper's slap. In any case, Almodóvar's leading players don't set off enough sparks to convince us of their attraction to each other. Banderas, whom Almodóvar has used previously as an object of desire, seems miscast as the obsessed lover. He doesn't project a lot of passion, and Abril looks defeated by his blankness.

The limpness of "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" suggests that Almodóvar is a confused director, or a tired one—probably a bit of both. In this picture he seems not to have decided whether he's making one of his cheerful, light erotic farces (like "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" and "Labyrinth of Passion") or one of his darker comedies of sexual obsession (like "Matador" and "Law of Desire"). "Tie Me Up!" halfheartedly mixes elements of both modes. It's as if he had made this movie solely to satisfy the public's desire for a new Almodóvar film. He doesn't have anything to say right now, and he seems to be having trouble keeping his spirits up, but he soldiers on, throwing in all his familiar motifs and trying to give the illusion that he's as peppy as ever. The result isn't a disgrace—merely a disappointment. And for his trouble he, too, has been rewarded with an X rating from the M.P.A.A.—presumably for the frogman scene and one extended bout of lovemaking. ("Tie Me Up!" will be released unrated, as the Greenaway film was.) Neither scene is very shocking. The only thing that's unusual about the sex sequence, which shows Ricky and Marina frolicking in bed for the first time, is that it goes on for several minutes; the lovers pant and groan quite a bit, and Marina keeps begging Ricky not to finish. Actually, the scene is almost poignant, because we hear in it Almodóvar's exhortations to himself to keep going. He must know that his movie peaked too soon.

—Terrence Rafferty

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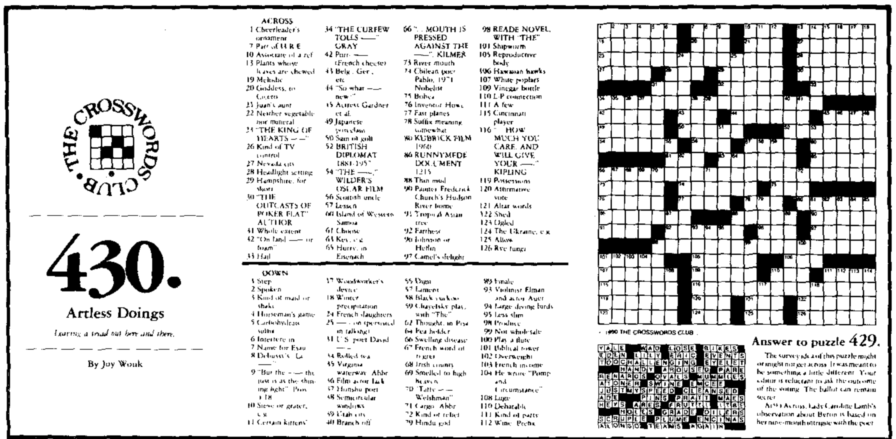

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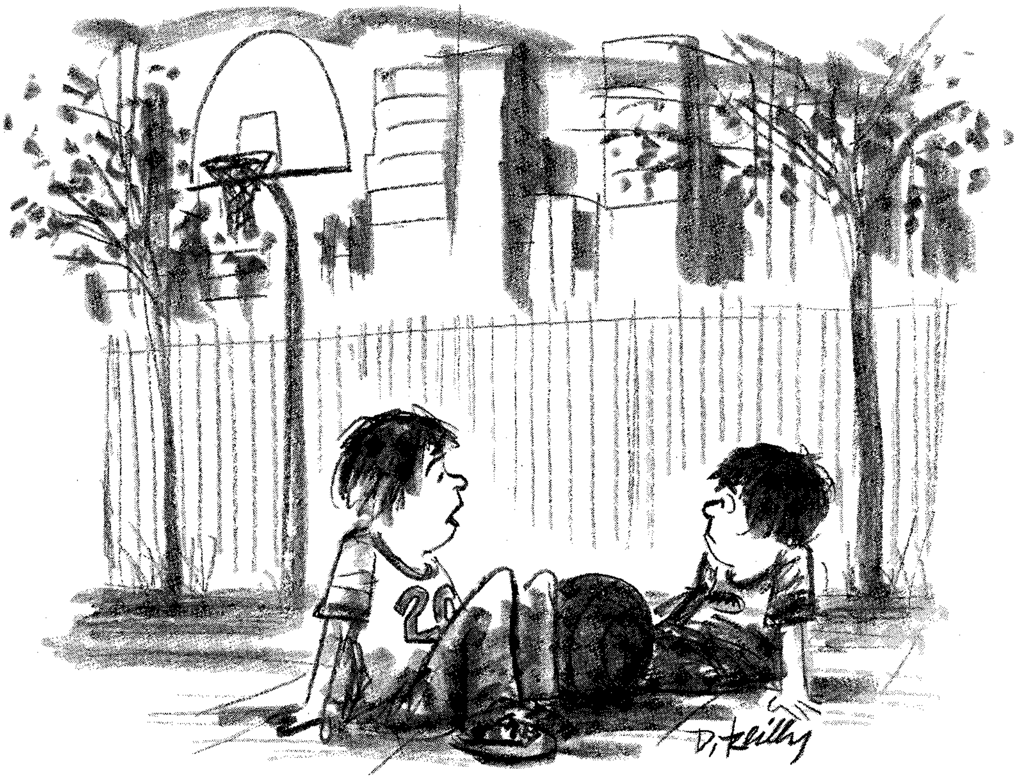
HISTORY matters enormously to boxers, although they tend to be revisionists who transform their painful experiences into gilded memories. Ask any ring veteran about his career, and the first thing he'll mention is the names of all the immortals with whom he has traded punches. Every young fighter dreams of entering the pantheon by winning a title someday, even though he may have spindly legs and a jaw made of glass. Sometimes it's enough for a boxer to be a footnote to history, since this earns him a marginal place in the record books, and rewards him with the sort of inside stories that get told in bars where the fight game is still important. In a sense, such stories are his capital, and if he's lucky he may be able to parlay them into a business opportunity and open a bar of his own when he retires—or so it goes in Irish Pat Lawlor's fantasy.

Lawlor is a good-natured San Francisco junior middleweight whose talents are not unlimited. Against the odds, he ekes out a living as a boxer in a city where boxing is less popular than origami. In many respects, Lawlor is a throwback to a bygone era, someone who would fit nicely as a bit player in a Jimmy Cagney film. At the age of twenty-six, he has a boyish charm, but he acts like a tough guy around strangers. Handsome in the rugged way of certain cops and firemen, he has a square jaw, a lightly freckled face, and reddish-brown hair, and when he puts on a favorite tweed cap—it looks as if a truck tire had crushed it—you figure he must be heading home to Donegal. His mind is strewn with boxing trivia, and he can recite the exact dates of all his bouts and will enumerate, without much prodding, his three greatest thrills as a fighter: being carried from the ring after his first pro victory; getting a fan letter from West Germany; and taking part in an exhibition match with Roberto Durán, a Panamanian immortal.

The exhibition occurred last July, at the Civic Auditorium in San Francisco. It's no understatement to say that Lawlor worshipped his opponent. In Durán he saw the epitome of what a boxer should be—a blend of savagery and soul. Four times a world champ, Durán started fighting in Colón when he was fifteen, and soon became known for his killer instinct. He seemed to take weakness in others as a personal affront, something intolerable in human beings which he'd been authorized to stamp out. In his prime, he had a body that appeared to have been carved from a granite mountain and set upon the earth in a single, indestructible piece. When Durán wasn't boxing, he lived like a playboy, hanging around night clubs until dawn or tooling about the dusty streets of Panama City in one of his five Alfa Romeos. He loved eating steaks, drinking Johnnie Walker Scotch, and dancing to salsa music, but in time this undermined his desire to train, and he would retire for a while, then return for a fight or two, and then retire again.

In 1988, Durán launched another comeback attempt, and it led him eventually to Lawlor and the Civic. Financial concerns motivated him—he owed the Internal Revenue Service more than a million dollars—but he also hoped to erase a blemish from his otherwise noble record. A ghost from the past haunted him—Sugar Ray Leonard. In 1980, he had suffered an embarrassing defeat against Leonard while defending his world welterweight title. Durán had whipped Leonard once, but in the rematch Sugar Ray had bamboozled him, taunting him with silly gestures and finally so upsetting him that Durán just quit in the eighth round, breaking a boxing taboo. "*No más!*" he cried, and the phrase followed him home to Panama, where his surrender was viewed as a national disgrace, as well as an insult to machismo. Durán blamed his lack of courage on stomach cramps. Before the bout, he had reportedly stuffed himself with two eggs, grits, peaches, toast, an orange, two T-bones, peas, French fries, and a portion of fried chicken, washing it all down with consommé, hot tea, water, Kool-Aid, and four large glasses of orange juice.

Lawlor had heard about



"They're making me go to humanities camp."

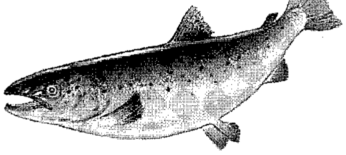
Durán's appetite, so he wasn't surprised when the Panamanian arrived in San Francisco weighing almost two hundred pounds, more than forty pounds over his ideal weight, as if he'd been training in a smorgasbord restaurant. It puzzled Lawlor, though, because Durán had been trim and muscular in February, when he took a split decision from Iran Barkley, a top middleweight, and reëstablished his credentials as a contender. The real question was whether or not this meant that Sugar Ray Leonard would give Durán another shot. Lawlor had no fondness for Sugar Ray. In his opinion, Leonard was arrogant, a corporate type who played ball with the TV networks and cut deals that were the envy of every other boxer, with the possible exception of Mike Tyson (at least, before Buster Douglas dismantled Iron Mike). Though Lawlor admired Leonard's skills, he did not approve of the man or his methods: Leonard was too slick, too polished, too stuck up for his own good.

A crowd of about five thousand fans packed the Civic—a huge crowd by current standards. When Lawlor climbed into the ring, accompanied by his aging trainer, Al Citrino, he could have been stealing a scene from his favorite boxing movie, "Somebody Up There Likes Me." He realized that he might never again have such a moment, yet he didn't feel that the moment was undeserved. After all, he had a perfect record of eleven wins and no losses, and local sportswriters had selected him Northern California's Preliminary Fighter of the Year for 1988. It was true that he'd never faced a boxer of tested calibre—the fellows he had beaten were often pulled in off the streets—but everyone had to start somewhere. Lawlor understood, too, that most people in the auditorium had come to see Durán, but a vocal contingent of his own supporters was also present, distinguishing themselves by their hoots, their cheers, and their shamrock-colored clothing.

One promise Lawlor had made to himself was that he wouldn't challenge Durán or try to show him up. This exhibition wasn't a real bout anyway, not with four two-minute rounds and sixteen-ounce gloves. The idea was to keep Durán busy and in the public eye until Leonard could be pinned to a contract. So when Durán seemed content to throw soft punches Lawlor sparred listlessly and never pressed for an advantage. Better to make a friend than an enemy, he thought. He was ecstatic just to be in with a true champion, amazed that such a fat man, now thirty-eight years old, could be so graceful. Durán wore a T-shirt to hide his belly, but the extra pounds did not hamper his punching ability. At one point, he backed Lawlor into a corner and tattooed him with combinations, *bam-bam*, all put forth with terrific speed, and Lawlor accepted the blows not as a kind of punishment but as taps from a realm beyond the ordinary, where, in the not too distant future, he hoped to dwell himself.

THE exhibition forged a bond between Irish Pat Lawlor and Roberto Durán, linking them, however loosely, in the annals of the ring. In exchange for his gentlemanly behavior Lawlor had gained a story about Durán's English, which was better than anyone had suspected, and a story about drinking beer with Durán after the show, out at the Boathouse, a sports bar, where young Irish-Catholic men pursue young Irish-Catholic women. Durán had even visited Newman's Gym, in the Tenderloin, where Lawlor trains, and he shook hands and signed autographs. The Panamanian was a class act, and when Lawlor learned that a deal for Leonard-Durán III had indeed been made he was very happy for his new friend. The fight was to be held in Las Vegas on December 7th, and the boxers would split about twenty million dollars, with Leonard getting the lion's share.

By coincidence, when December rolled around, Lawlor had a fight, his thirteenth, scheduled for the Cow Palace. (He'd won his twelfth in September.) On the first of the month, he climbed between the ropes to meet Drafton Bunch, a journeyman from San Diego. For his effort Lawlor would be paid fifteen hundred dollars. The line on Bunch was that he had a weak chin, but this turned out not to be the case. Bunch could take a punch, and he could also toss one. For three rounds, he eluded Lawlor, talking all the while. "What say, Pat?" he'd coo. "You want some action?" Then, out of the blue, in the sixth round, he landed a powerful right that caught Lawlor on the temple and sent him to the canvas for the first time in his



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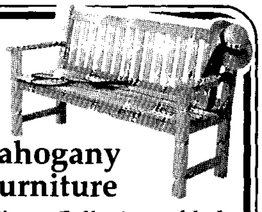

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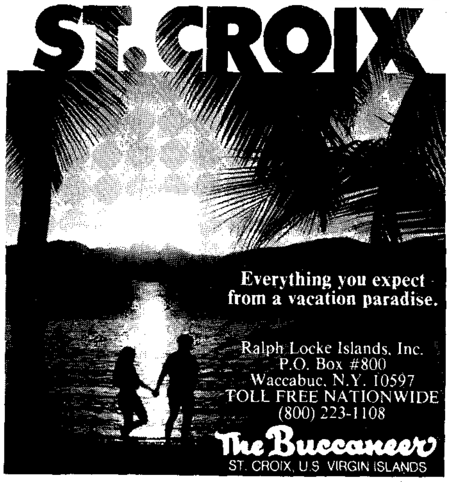

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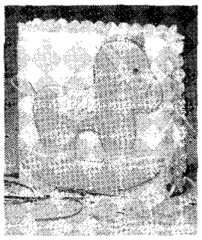

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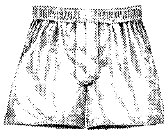

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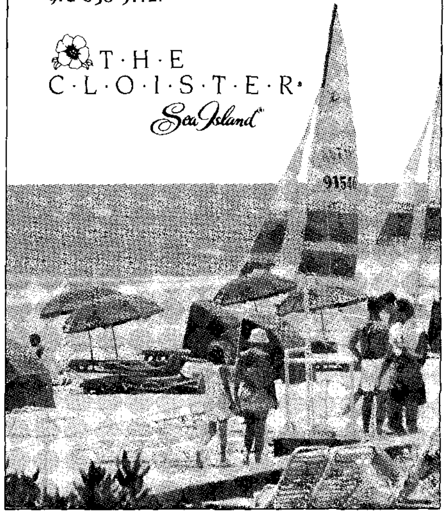
life. He rose quickly to his feet and proceeded to rally, but Bunch played it cool and cute, evading contact and working just enough to stay ahead on the judges' scorecard.

Lawlor took the loss hard. He went home a changed person, undefeated no more. He knew that a record of twelve and one created a vastly different impression from a record of thirteen and zero. Sometimes he was able to see the vanished zero in a positive light, as the lifting of a burden. Other boxers might not pursue him aggressively now, or be so eager to beat him. But then his mood would grow dark, and he'd get angry about losing (though in his heart he believed that he had won) and would curse himself for agreeing to fight Bunch. Al Citrino had warned him not to, and anyway he should have been more cautious, since it was his thirteenth bout—unlucky thirteen! His pals consoled him by saying that at least he had survived a knockdown, but Lawlor, splitting hairs, replied that surviving hadn't been his intention. He had wanted to win. Besides, he didn't think he had really been knocked down. His feet had slipped, and he had fallen.

About the only thing that kept up Lawlor's spirits was the prospect of watching Leonard-Durán III on television. A couple of days before the big event, he was padding around his underfurnished living room, licking his wounds (black eye, bruised nose, sore wrist) and planning a party for his friends. He had on sweatpants and a Jeff Beck T-shirt, and his feet, size 12, were bare. It was chilly outside, and Lawlor was burning old newspapers in his fireplace, feeding sheet after sheet to the flames until his hands were black with ink. He had hoped to shadowbox at Newman's in the afternoon, but his car, a used Mazda he'd bought cheap, wouldn't start. It had a problem with the solenoid, but even after Lawlor banged the engine with an empty beer bottle it wouldn't turn over, so he had some unexpected free time to chat with a visitor. He sat in a battered recliner and spoke of how much he liked to run on the beach.

"I love doing roadwork, but I have trouble with it," he said, bouncing to his feet and showing off a surgical scar on his right calf. "My hamstrings and tendons are real tight. It's like a birth defect. When I was a kid, I had three operations. One when I was five, one



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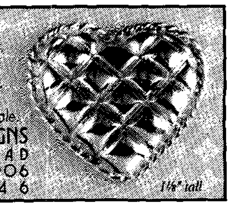

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when I was nine, and one when I was fourteen. You know what I need to work on most? My concentration. I never should have lost to Bunch." Bunch seemed to materialize in the living room, a wraith from the flames, and Lawlor hit him with a combination, *bam-bam*. "I was only fifty per cent that night. Next year, 1990, I'm getting serious about my career. My new manager, Tom McGarvey, who owns Red's Java House, is going to help me—and he won't charge me a penny. I'm going to start watching my diet. No more beer and no more pizza. Pizza I eat three, four times a week. Always the same pizza. Pepperoni, mushrooms, and barbecued pork. 'Course, people die from eating good food, too." He grinned and hit Bunch another shot. "You know what I need to develop? A killer instinct like Durán's. I've been too nice of a guy."

The phone rang. It was Lawlor's mother, who lives nearby, calling about what she was going to cook for the party. After talking with her, Lawlor dashed to his bedroom and brought back his West German fan letter, handling it tenderly. A fellow named Gerd claimed to be "delighted and thrilled" with Lawlor's "fine young ring life" and asked for an autographed photo. Gerd signed himself "Sportingly yours." The letter had an almost talismanic effect on the boxer, as if it confirmed a special vision he had of himself. A high-school dropout, somebody for whom books are a form of torture, Lawlor had never dreamed he would receive such mail, especially from a foreign country. It was easy to picture the letter in a frame on a barroom wall, perhaps displayed next to the portrait in oils—Irish Pat in green trunks, his fists at the ready—that a fan had painted. In fact, boxing had opened up a world to Lawlor, offering enlightenment and a sense of possibility, and though he had to train constantly, and sometimes work at odd jobs, unloading trucks or hauling furniture, to make ends meet, he could not imagine a better, more independent way to live.

"My mother's going to cook Italian," he said happily, jumping into the recliner again. "Pasta with meat sauce, garlic bread, stuff like that. It'll cost me over a hundred dollars, but it's going to be a great fight. I like Durán to win." He paused for a few seconds, his brow knitted in prophecy. "Sugar Ray's a runner, and runners tire before trackers. Around the ninth, or maybe the tenth, Durán will catch him. He'll probably knock him out. You come around here for the party, and you'll meet my friends. Everything from choirboys to cutthroats. A lot of girls, too. Believe me, you'll have a good time."

THE house Irish Pat Lawlor rents is in the Outer Sunset, a fogbound, working-class district at the edge of the Pacific Ocean. The Irish have always lived there in large numbers, perhaps because the melancholy weather reminds them of Dublin or Galway. They send their children to Holy Name School, and the children grow up and seldom move away. Families try (and often fail) to preserve the traditional virtues. There are many dark, cubbyhole bars where customers are offered penitential gloom and Guinness on tap. A few shops still sell soda bread and imported oatmeal, but they look a little lost in the midst of proliferating Asian markets. The atmosphere in the district is curiously old-fashioned, suggesting a time when every immigrant neighborhood in town had a resident boxer who was its pride, just as Lawlor is now the Pride of the Sunset.

On fight night, guests began arriving at the house in the early evening. A TV was on in the living room, and it broadcast pictures of a boxing ring outside the Mirage Hotel, in the Nevada desert, where the temperature had dropped into the thirties. The ring had an eerie quality, as if it had been lowered to the ground from a spaceship for a purpose yet to be explained. According to an announcer, Leonard was a nine-to-five favorite, but a lot of hopeful money was riding on Durán. Among the Lawlor crowd, Leonard found no support. He stood for carpaccio and Evian, not hamburgers and club soda. Durán was like the old Brooklyn Dodgers, a little weird, a little ragged, and probably in need of divine intervention. His mother was in attendance, and so was his wife—doubtless, they'd be offering prayers. If he were to lose, the argument went, he would let down his countrymen again and cause blood to be spilled in the streets of Panama. His appeal to the Irish was huge.

Around six o'clock, a well-dressed man rang the doorbell and introduced

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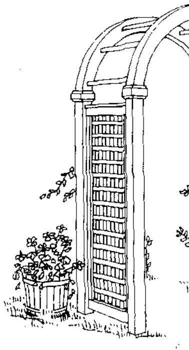

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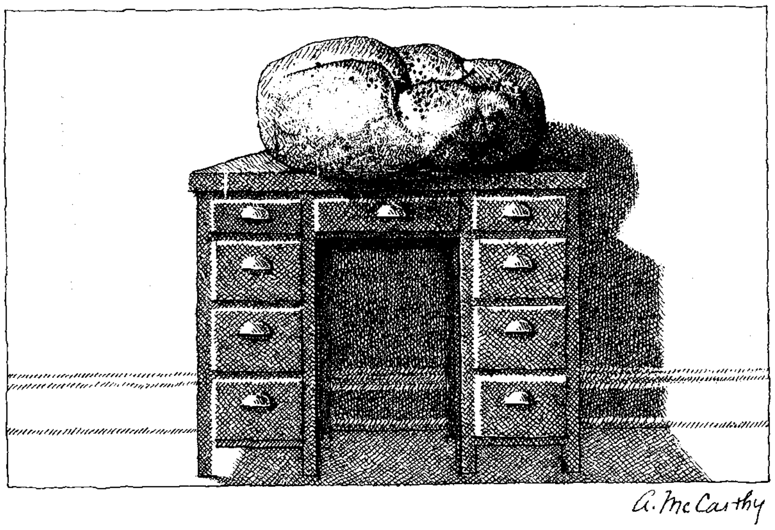
himself as Lawlor's dentist. A neighborhood soccer coach came next, followed by a blond light heavy from Newman's. Al Citrino, his merry eyes blinking, appraised the kid and judged him a prospect. A steady stream of young men in their twenties, all former Holy Namers, kept rolling in, greeting each other with shouts and high fives. They were a rough-and-tumble bunch. When they went to a bout of Irish Pat's—Lawlor sold them the tickets himself, taking a cut of the profits—they often became crazed and moderately violent, forming themselves into a beer-soaked human juggernaut that moved through auditoriums thrashing anything in its path. They liked a good punch-up, that was all.

Lawlor himself was in his element, surrounded by admirers. Among his friends he strolled, appearing princely, a bottle of Bud in one hand and his tweed cap on his head. He had spent the day cleaning, and now there were no empties cluttering counters and no moldy sweat clothes anywhere. The kitchen smelled of garlic and oregano, and the bathroom almost sparkled. As he circulated, Lawlor gave off a vibration of utter happiness. If a girl flirted with him, he flirted back. He knew himself to be more fit than anyone else in the room, more daring, better prepared for the long haul. For a boxer this physical prowess was the true bottom line, and it provided Lawlor with an extra dimension. There is a subtle calculus in the absorbing of blows, and so far he was still on the right side of the ledger, relatively intact. He was not a champ, surely, but among his Sunset home boys he had the look of one.


THE ROLL-TOP DESK

Unfortunately, the same could not be said of Roberto Durán. Lawlor was dismayed at how scrawny the Panamanian looked on entering the ring in Nevada. Durán had shed the necessary pounds, but his arms were thin, and he seemed tentative about the adventure ahead of him. It must have upset him to see Sugar Ray Leonard parading down an aisle in a sort of karate outfit and a black knit cap, as if intending to foil Durán with the martial arts before committing a criminal act upon him. The bell sounded, and the boxers confronted each other gingerly, feeling each other out. Surprises were few. Leonard danced and skipped, then darted in to land quick lefts and rights that did no particular damage. If he had lost a step or two because of age, it did not matter. He was still too fast for Durán, who stalked him predictably, trying to get close and force Sugar Ray to brawl. Durán was flat of foot, a plodder beating to death a single idea, somebody in whom a saving bit of intelligence was not about to bloom.

His performance didn't sit well with the fans at Lawlor's house. Why didn't Durán use his big punch, a right that had crippled opponents in the past? "Throw the right," Lawlor urged him, demonstrating. Against the evidence, everyone continued to believe that Durán would wake up any minute and—like a superhero—reveal his extraordinary gifts, but as the rounds went by it became clearer and clearer that he was over the hill. He couldn't connect with Leonard, could scarcely touch him. Instead, he kept getting hit, sometimes solidly enough to wobble his legs and make him grin in the stupefied way of a boxer in trouble. The only things bothering Leonard were cuts above his eyes and inside his lip. Otherwise, he was in charge. He clowned around a little, baiting Durán and coasting to an easy victory. It was a sorry spectacle—a real stinker of a fight—and when it ended there was nothing for Lawlor to do but turn up the volume on his stereo and rinse the bad taste from his mouth with another bottle of beer.

EVERY Saturday morning, Al Citrino, who is seventy-nine, unlocks the door to Newman's Gym, and he did so after the Durán affair, waiting for Pat Lawlor to come in for a training session. Newman's is an unadorned place with a plank floor, mirrored walls, punching bags, and a ring whose canvas has been patched repeatedly with duct tape. A buzzer goes off rhythmically—three minutes, one minute, three minutes, one minute—so that men who are shadowboxing can count the rounds. In a small office at the back, autographed photos hang from nails, including a shot of Citrino taken when he was trim and dapper and all the hair on his head was brown. A veteran of a hundred and forty-two pro fights, he once boxed the great welterweight Henry Armstrong, and suffered a T.K.O. If he is asked, he describes Armstrong's style very simply. "Busy," he says. "Busy."

About nine-thirty, Lawlor wandered in, carrying a gym bag. His eye was less black, and his nose no longer threatened to touch his ears. He stripped to trunks and a T-shirt, laced on a pair of boxing shoes, and began to do some stretching exercises.

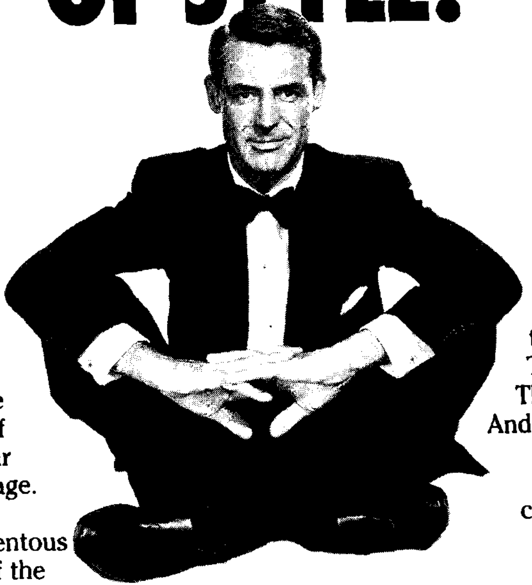
"So what about that fight the other night?" Citrino asked him.

Lawlor snorted. "Seven million dollars," he said, shaking his head in disgust. "Durán should not *even* have been paid."

In boxing, there's an unwritten rule that forbids the belaboring of the obvious. A bad fight is allowed to recede into the mists, so that everyone can sustain an illusion that the sport's history consists of an unbroken string of spectacular moments. Dempsey versus Tunney. Ali versus Frazier. Hagler versus Hearns.

When Lawlor had worked up a sweat, he put on some training gloves and started hitting a bag. Citrino observed and offered pointers, at the same

SOME THINGS NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE.



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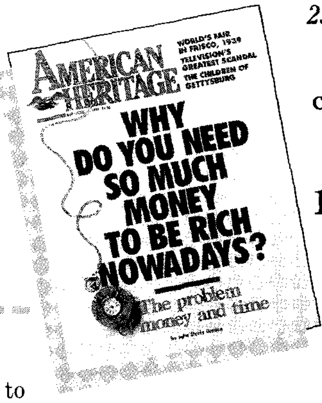
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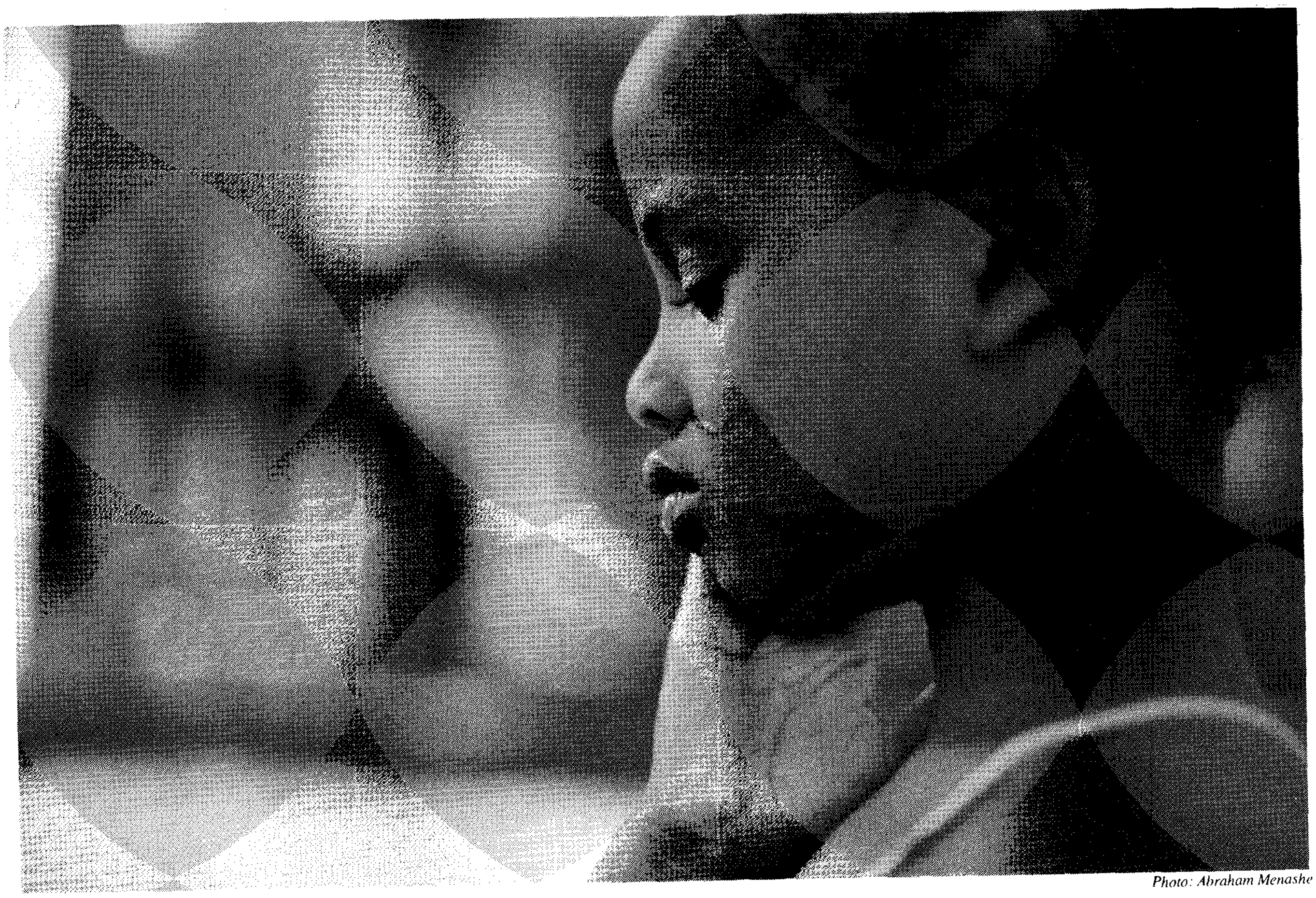

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time conversing with Chuck Burkhardt, who works in Lawlor's corner when he fights. Chuck is seventy-one years old. There are no middle-aged people at Newman's, just old men, young boxers, and ghosts. The old men remember when you could attend a match in the Bay Area almost every night of the week. Bouts in Oakland, in San Francisco, in San Jose, and in Sacramento. Bouts at a joint called Dreamland, which later became a skating rink called Winterland, which later became a rock-and-roll venue, and is now a condominium complex.

"In 1938, when I fought Armstrong at the Civic, we drew about fourteen thousand," Citrino said to Chuck.

"That's a nice crowd."

"Sure it is. You take Pat, here, Chuckie, he's a fair fighter, he could become a draw. But the promoters don't help him. They should put him in against a guy with a big name who's on the way down. Know what I mean?"

"Sure," Chuck said. "Guy on the way down."

Citrino towelled the sweat from Lawlor's brow, and Lawlor stepped into the ring to shadowbox. Sometimes he imagined he was fighting Marvin Hagler. Sometimes Rocky Graziano.

"How you feeling, Pat?" Citrino asked.

"I feel real good, Al."

"Well, you look good. You didn't get tired when you went eight rounds against Bunch, did you?"

"Hell, no. I'd go twenty rounds against that son of a bitch."

"You think you can go ten, Pat?"

"Any time."

"You go ten rounds, you're going to have to be a good boy, you know. No beer, no pizza. You going to be a good boy?"

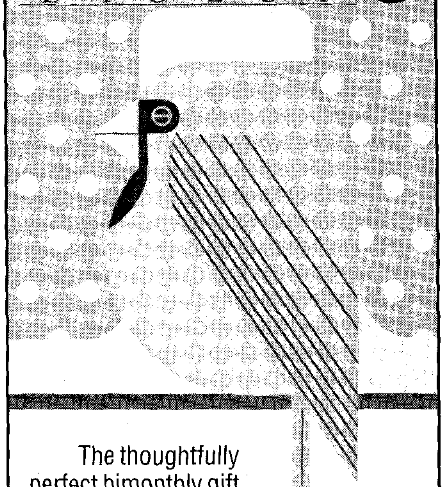
Lawlor smiled and threw a combination, *bam-bam*. "Sure," he said. "In 1990."

FOR boxing fans, the new decade started with an amusing fiasco in Atlantic City that featured two aging heavyweights from the past, George Foreman and Gerry Cooney, pretending that they were legitimate contenders for a title shot instead of geriatric cases out to entertain the public. Cooney claimed to have triumphed in his battle against drugs and alcohol, but he boxed so clumsily that maybe a little substance abuse might have helped him to cut loose, and Foreman, whose forty-second birthday loomed on the horizon, floored him in short order. A preliminary bout between Doug DeWitt and Matthew Hilton provided far more action, even though Hilton, like Cooney, was recuperating from too many days spent in too many bars.

It was only natural for Pat Lawlor to hold a party for the fight, and once again his friends and his family gathered to have dinner and comment on the fine points, such as DeWitt's nose, from which, rumor had it, all the bones had been surgically removed to ease the boxer's breathing. Again, Lawlor circulated around the living room, but he sipped a soft drink and looked purposeful, preparing himself for a rematch with Drafton Bunch at the end of January. The new year had also brought him a new pen pal—an elderly fighter from Rochester, who had conducted his career under the name of Irish Pat *Lawler*. Lawler had sent a picture that showed him sitting next to Jersey Joe Walcott at a banquet, and it was passed from guest to guest, along with an autographed glossy of a *Penthouse* Pet, who admired the Pride and was said to want to take a ride with him. This caused Lawlor to blush a little while simultaneously accepting congratulations on his good fortune.

To get ready for the rematch, Lawlor hired Eric (The Prince) Martin as a sparring partner. Martin was black and experienced, and had a jivey style that was similar to Bunch's. Lawlor also studied a videotape of the first fight, watching it over and over, so that he could learn from his mistakes. He concentrated as hard as he was able, even dreaming about Bunch and his demise, and when Bunch flew up from San Diego and bragged on a radio program that he planned to bust his opponent's jaw it only served to fuel Lawlor's dedication. He felt that he had something important to prove, but then, at the last minute, Bunch pulled out of the bout, claiming that his ribs were bruised.

It was futile to guess whether or not Bunch was telling the truth. Boxers often concoct ailments, suddenly becoming as delicate as Victorian maidens, in the hope of prying some extra cash from a promoter—in this case, two promoters, Jimi Sosa and Jimmy Keith. Though Sosa and Keith



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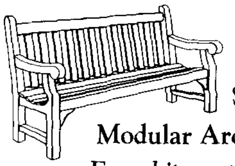

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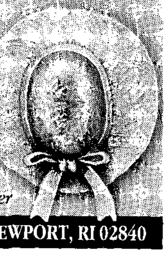

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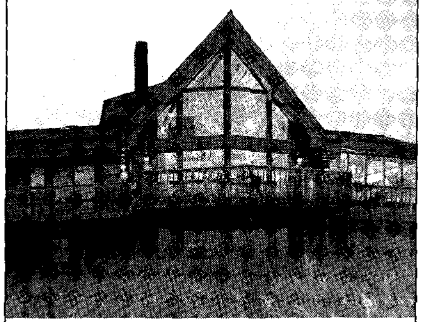

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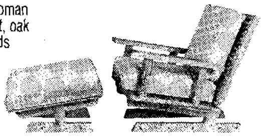

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have been around the block, they are still subject to fits if somebody attempts to hold them up, and they began a frantic search for a replacement for Bunch, calling around the American West and cutting a deal first with Ali Sanchez, which fell through, and then with Eric McNair, which fell through, and then, finally, with Virgil Green, a black fighter from Richmond, across the Bay Bridge. So Lawlor, disappointed and left in the lurch, had just four days to devise a plan of attack, knowing absolutely nothing about Green except that he was a big hitter. "If you're still standing after three rounds, Pat," Jimi Sosa advised him, "you'll have a chance."

Such advice rests uncomfortably on a boxer's shoulders, and when Lawlor got into the ring at the Civic he did not appear overanxious for the fight to start. Green was a lanky, rough-looking customer, with long arms, ripply stomach muscles, and hair done in tight cornrows. He wasted no time in hammering Lawlor, bloodying his nose and working on his body, leaving inflamed blotches on Lawlor's skin. For a while, it seemed that Lawlor would go down. He did slip in the second, doing an awkward flop to the canvas, but he managed to make it through the round and then the next, and, slowly gathering confidence, he pounded Green's body in return, catching him in the head with a solid right that must have set the birds in there to twittering. Lawlor's approach was not elegant. It lacked grace and finesse, demonstrating instead the virtues of *honest toil, the* sort of routine but effective labor that small tradesmen use as they fix leaky pipes and patch cracking plaster. Soon Green began to tire, to look less menacing and more bedraggled, and Lawlor kept after him, pushing him against the ropes and exerting enough control to win a unanimous decision.

As a sport, boxing is so full of paradox and so riddled with ironies that it tends to bring out a philosophical streak in fighters, and Irish Pat Lawlor's mood was indeed philosophical in the wake of his victory. Money problems were perhaps foremost in his mind. In taking on Green, he had signed for an eight-rounder—not the ten-round feature he would have had with Bunch—and the promoters had docked him nine hundred dollars.

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Worse, he'd taken some tickets on account from Keith and Sosa, and had failed to sell very many, which left him twelve hundred dollars in arrears. When the sum was deducted from Lawlor's already whittled-down purse, he would earn exactly four hundred dollars for the fight.

"I'm never going to sell tickets again," he said to a visitor. "No way! You know what happened? My friends, they all showed up at the Civic, but they bought tickets at the gate instead of from me. I lost my ass. I have my friends over to party, I feed them, and they say, 'Yeah, sure, Pat, I'll buy a ticket next week.' It's frustrating. I want a haircut, but I don't know if I can afford one." He let out a sigh. "Well, I may be broke, but I'm still happy I won. I could have performed better, though. It was a show of heart, not a show of skill. The public enjoyed it. Green tried. I went up to him afterward and told him he could have a rematch any time. You know what he said? 'Hey, man, I don't want any rematch with you.'

"In a couple of months, I might fight for a new promoter. A guy up in Petaluma. I need to keep working. Get in there, get myself rated by one of the organizations, then maybe fight for a title. Did you ever hear about something called the World Boxing Association Intercontinental junior-middleweight title? Ron Amundsen, he has it now. I saw the championship belt on TV. It's beautiful, all blue and gold." Lawlor's thoughts turned toward history, toward the longing of human beings to make something special of themselves. "That's really all I want. A chance to fight for a title. I don't want to go on doing this forever, you know?"

—BILL BARICH

•

Nuzum reported that the minutes of the last meeting were unavailable because they were sold inadvertently at a recent garage sale.—*Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel.*

Oops.

•

She stressed the importance of women completing their education and considers an open mind and deep thought essential to raising a family.

Hafen is an enthusiastic reader and claims "Lame is Rob" by Victor Hugo as her favorite book.—*The Scroll, newspaper of Ricks College, in Rexburg, Idaho.*

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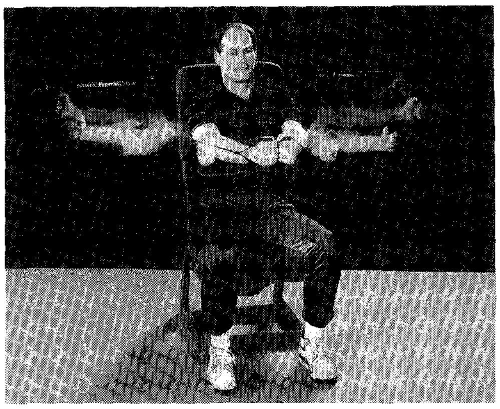

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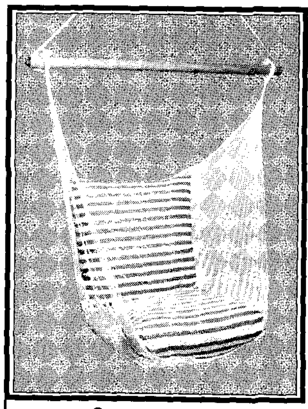

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AFTERLIVES: THE CASE OF MACHADO DE ASSIS

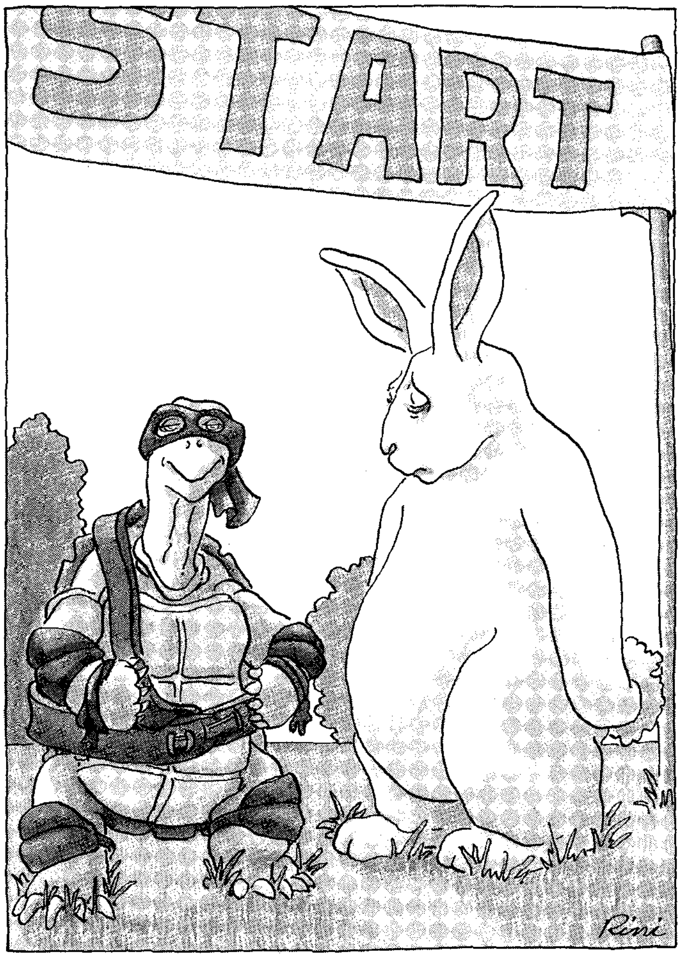
IMAGINE a writer who in the course of a moderately long life, in which he never travelled farther than seventy-five miles from the capital city where he was born, created a huge body of work— A nineteenth-century writer, you will interrupt, and you will be right: author of a profusion of novels, novellas, stories, plays, essays, poetry, reviews, political chronicles, as well as reporter, magazine editor, government bureaucrat, candidate for public office, and founding president of his country's Academy of Letters; a prodigy of accomplishment, of the transcending of social and physical infirmity (he was a mulatto in a country where slavery was not abolished until he was almost fifty; he was epileptic), who, during this vividly prolific, exuberantly national career, managed to write a sizable number of novels and stories deserving of a permanent place in world literature, and whose masterpieces, outside his native country, which honors him as its greatest writer, are little known, rarely mentioned.

Imagine such a writer, who did exist, and his most original books, which continue to be discovered, more than eighty years after his death. Normally, the filter of time is just, discarding the merely successful, rescuing the forgotten, promoting the underestimated. It is in the afterlife of a great writer when the mysterious questions of value and permanence are resolved. Perhaps it is fitting that this writer, whose afterlife has not brought his work the recognition that it merits, should himself have had so acute, so ironic, so endearing a sense of the posthumous.

WHAT is true of a reputation is true—should be true—of a life. Since it is only a completed life that reveals its shape and whatever meaning a life can have, a biography that means to be definitive must wait until after the death of its subject. Unfortunately, autobiographies can't be composed under these ideal circumstances. And virtually all the notable fictional autobiographies have respected the limitation of real ones while conjuring up a next-best equivalent of the illuminations of death. Fictional autobiographies, even more often than real ones, tend to be autumnal undertakings: an elderly (or, at least, loss-seasoned) narrator, having retired from life, now writes. But, close as old age may bring the fictive autobiographer to the ideal vantage point, he or she is still writing on the wrong side of the frontier beyond which a life, a life story, finally makes sense.

I know only one example of that enthralling genre the imaginary autobiography which grants the project of autobiography its ideal—as it turns out, comical—fulfillment, and that is the masterpiece called "Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas" (1880), by the Brazilian writer Machado de Assis, and known in English by the rather interfering title "Epitaph of a Small Winner." In the first paragraph of Chapter 1, "The Death of the Author," Brás Cubas announces gaily, "I am a deceased writer not in the sense of one who has written and is now deceased, but in the sense of one who has died and is now writing." Here is the novel's first, framing joke, and it is about the writer's freedom. The reader is invited to play the game of considering that the book in hand is an unprecedented literary feat: posthumous reminiscences written in the first person.

Of course, not even a single day, much less a life, can ever be recounted in its entirety. A life is not a plot. And quite different ideas of decorum apply to a narrative constructed in the first person and to one in the third person. To slow down, to speed up, to skip whole stretches; to comment at length, to withhold comment—to do these as an "I" gives them another weight, another feel, than to say them about or on behalf of someone else. Much of what is affecting or pardonable or insufferable in the first person would seem the opposite if uttered in the third person, and vice versa: an observation easily confirmed by reading aloud any page from this book first as it is and a second time with "he" for "I." (To sample the fierce difference *within* the codes governing the third person, then try substituting "she" for "he.") There are registers of feeling, such as anxiety, that only a first-person voice can accommodate. And aspects of narrative performance as well: digressiveness, for instance, seems natural in a text written in the first person but amateurish in an impersonal, third-person voice. Thus any piece of writing that features an awareness of its own means and methods should be un-

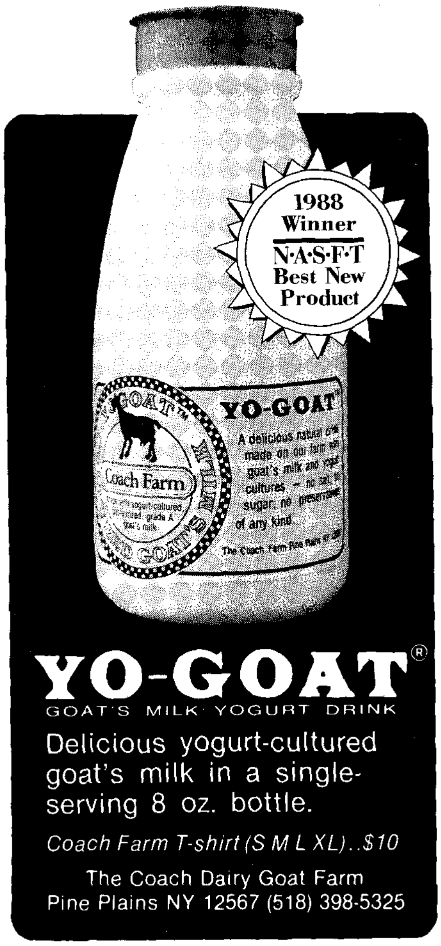


derstood as in the first person, whether or not the main pronoun is "I."

To write about oneself, to tell the true—that is, the private—story, used to be felt to be presumptuous, and to need justifying. Montaigne's "Essays," Rousseau's "Confessions," Thoreau's "Walden," and most of the other spiritually ambitious classics of autobiography have a prologue in which the author directly addresses the reader, acknowledging the temerity of the enterprise, evoking scruples or inhibitions (modesty, anxiety) that had to be overcome, laying claim to an exemplary artlessness or candor, alleging the usefulness to others of all this self-absorption. Like real autobiographies, most fictional autobiographies of any stylishness or depth also start with an explanation, defensive or defiant, of the decision to write the book the reader has just begun—or, at least, a flourish of self-deprecation, suggesting an attractive sensitivity to the charge of egotism. This is no mere throat-clearing, some polite sentences to give the reader time to be seated. It is the opening shot in a campaign of seduction, in which the autobiographer tacitly agrees that there is something unseemly, brazen, in *volunteering* to write at length about oneself—in exposing oneself to unknown others without the justification of a great career or a great crime, or without some documentary ruse, such as pretending that the book merely transcribes existing private papers, like a journal or letters, indiscretions originally destined for the smallest, friendliest readership. With a life story offered straight out, in the first person, to as many readers as possible (a "public"), it seems only minimal prudence as well as courtesy for the autobiographer to seek permission to begin. The splendid conceit of Machado de Assis's book, that these are memoirs written by someone who is dead, just puts an additional spin on this regulatory caring about what the reader thinks. The autobiographer can profess not to care.

But writing from beyond the grave has in fact not relieved this narrator from showing an ostentatious amount of concern about the reception of his work. His mock anxiety is embodied in the very form and the distinctive velocity of the book. It is in the way the narrative is cut and mounted, in stop-and-start rhythms: a hundred and sixty chapters, several as brief as two sentences, few longer than two pages. It is in the playful directions, usually at the beginning or end of chapters, for making the best use of the text: "This chapter is to be inserted between the first two sentences of Chapter 129"; "Please note that this chapter is not intended to be profound"; "But let us not become involved in psychology"; et cetera. It is in the pulse of ironic attention to the book's means and methods, the repeated disavowal of large claims on the reader's emotions: "I like jolly chapters." Asking the reader to indulge the narrator's penchant for frivolity is as much a seducer's ploy as promising the reader strong emotions and new knowledge. The autobiographer's suave fussing over the accuracy of his narrative procedures parodies the intensity of his self-absorption.

Digression is the main technique for controlling the emotional flow of this book. The narrator, whose head is full of literature, shows himself adept at expert descriptions—of the kind flattered with the name of realism—that chronicle how poignant feelings persist, change, evolve, devolve. He also shows himself understandably beyond such concerns by the dimensions of the telling: the cutting into short episodes; the ironic, didactic overviews. This oddly fierce, avowedly disenchanted voice (but then what else should we expect the voice of a narrator who is dead to be?) never relates an event without drawing some lesson from it. Chapter 133 opens, "The episode serves to illustrate and perhaps amend Helvetius' theory that . . ." Begging the reader's indulgence, worrying about the reader's attentiveness (Does the reader get it? Is the reader amused? Is the reader becoming bored?), the autobiographer continually breaks out of his story to invoke a theory it illustrates, to formulate an opinion about it—as if such devices were needed to make the story more interesting. Brás Cubas's socially privileged, self-important existence is, as such lives often are, starkly uneventful; the main events are those which did not happen or were judged disappointing. The rich production of witty opinions exposes the emotional poverty of the life, by exhibiting the narrator as seeming to sidestep conclusions he might otherwise be



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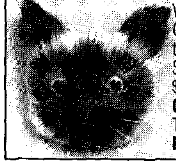

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drawing. The digressive method also generates much of the book's humor, starting with the very disparity between the life described (modest in events, subtly articulated) and the theories (portentous, blunt) invoked.

"The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy" is, of course, the principal model for these savory procedures of reader awareness. The method of tiny chapters, and also some of the typographical stunts, as in Chapter 55 ("The Venerable Dialogue of Adam and Eve") and Chapter 139 ("How I Did Not Become a Minister of State"), recall the whimsical narrative rhythms and pictographic witticisms of "Tristram Shandy." That Brás Cubas begins his story after his death, as Tristram Shandy famously begins the story of his consciousness before he is born (at the moment of his conception)—that, too, seems an homage to Sterne by Machado de Assis. The authority that "Tristram Shandy," published in installments between 1759 and 1767, exerted on a writer born in Brazil in the nineteenth century should not surprise us. While Sterne's books, so celebrated in his lifetime and shortly afterward, were being reassessed in England as too peculiar, occasionally indecent, and finally boring, they continued to be enormously admired on the Continent. In the English-speaking world, where in this century Sterne has again been thought very highly of, he still figures as an ultra-eccentric, marginal genius (like Blake), who is most notable for being uncannily, and prematurely, "modern." When looked at from the perspective of world literature, however, he may be the English-language writer who, after Shakespeare and Dickens, has had the greatest influence; for Nietzsche to have said that his favorite novel was "Tristram Shandy" is not quite as original a judgment as it may seem. Sterne has been an especially potent presence in the literatures of the Slavic languages, as is reflected in the centrality of the example of "Tristram Shandy" in the theories of Shklovsky and other Russian formalists, from the nineteen-twenties forward. Perhaps the reason so much commanding prose literature has been issuing for decades from Central and Eastern Europe as well as from Latin America is not only that writers there have been suffering under monstrous tyrannies and therefore have had importance, seriousness, subjects, relevant irony bestowed on

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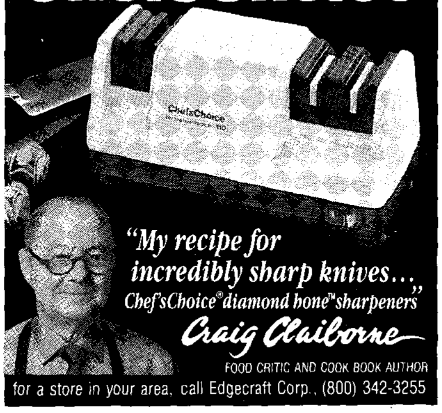
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them (as many writers in Western Europe and the United States have half-enviously concluded) but also that these are the parts of the world where for over a century the author of "Tristram Shandy" has been the most admired.

Machado de Assis's novel belongs in that tradition of narrative buffoonery—the talkative first-person voice attempting to ingratiate itself with readers—which runs from Sterne through, in our own century, Natsume Sōseki's "I Am a Cat," the short fiction of Robert Walser, Svevo's "Confessions of Zeno" and "As a Man Grows Older," Hrabal's "Too Loud a Solitude," much of Beckett. We meet again and again, in different guises, the chatty, meandering, compulsively speculative, eccentric narrator: reclusive (by choice or by vocation); prone to futile obsessions and fanciful theories and comically designed efforts of the will; often an autodidact; not quite a crank; though sometimes driven by lust, and at least one time by love, unable to mate; usually elderly; invariably male. (No woman is likely to get even the conditional sympathy these ragingly self-absorbed narrators claim from us, because of expectations that women will be more sympathetic, and sympathizing, than men; a woman with the same degree of mental acuity and emotional separateness would be regarded as simply a monster.) Machado de Assis's valetudinarian Brás Cubas is considerably less exuberant than Sterne's madcap, effusively garrulous Tristram Shandy. It is only a few steps from the incisiveness of Machado's narrator, with his rueful superiority to the story of his own life, to the plot malaise that characterizes most recent fiction in the form of autobiography. But storylessness may be intrinsic to the genre—the novel as autobiographical monologue—as is the isolation of the narrating voice. In this respect the post-Sternean antihero like Brás Cubas parodies the protagonist of the great spiritual autobiographies, who is always profoundly, not just by circumstance, unmarried. It is almost a measure of an autobiographical narrative's ambition: the narrator must be, or be recast as, alone, a solitary, certainly without a spouse, even when there is one; the life must be unpeopled at the center. (Thus such recent achievements of spiritual autobiography in the guise of a novel as Elizabeth Hardwick's "Sleepless Nights" and V. S. Naipaul's "The Enigma of Arrival" leave out the spouses who were actually there.) Just as Brás Cubas's solitariness is a parody of a chosen or an emblematic solitude, his release through self-understanding is, for all its self-confidence and wit, a parody of that sort of triumph.

The seductions of such a narrative are complex. The narrator professes to be worrying about the reader—whether the reader gets it. Meanwhile, the reader can be wondering about the narrator—whether the narrator understands all the implications of what is being told. A display of mental agility and inventiveness which is designed to amuse the reader and which purportedly reflects the liveliness of the narrator's mind mostly measures how emotionally isolated and forlorn the narrator is. Ostensibly, Machado's novel is the book of a life. Yet, despite the narrator's gift for social and psychological portraiture, it remains a tour of the inside of someone's head. Another of Machado's models was a marvellous book by Xavier de Maistre, a French expatriate aristocrat (he lived most of his long life in Russia), who invented the literary micro-journey with his "Journey Around My Room," which was written in 1794, when he was in prison for duelling, and which recounts his diagonal and zigzag visits to such diverting sites as the armchair, the desk, and the bed. A confinement, mental or physical, that is not acknowledged as such can make a very funny story as well as one charged with pathos.

At the beginning, in a flourish of authorial self-knowingness that graciously includes the reader, Machado de Assis has his autobiographer name the eighteenth-century literary models of his narrative with the following sombre warning:

> It is, in truth, a diffuse work, in which I, Brás Cubas, if indeed I have adopted the free form of a Sterne or of a Xavier de Maistre, have possibly added a certain peevish pessimism of my own. Quite possibly. The work of a man already dead. I wrote it with the pen of Mirth and the ink of Melancholy, and one can readily foresee what may come of such a union.

However modulated by whimsy, a vein of true misanthropy runs through the book. If Brás Cubas is not just another of those repressed, desiccated, pointlessly self-aware bachelor narrators who exist only to be seen through

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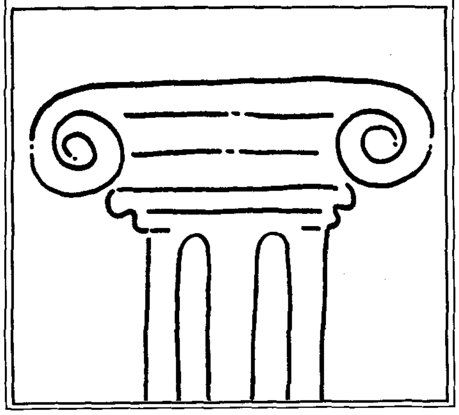

by the full-blooded reader, it is because of his anger—which by the end of the book is full out, painful, bitter, upsetting.

The Sternean playfulness is lighthearted. It is a comic, albeit extremely nervous, form of friendliness with the reader. In the nineteenth century, this digressiveness, this chattiness, this love of the little theory, this pirouetting from one narrative mode to another, takes on darker hues. It becomes identified with hypochondria, with erotic disillusionment, with the discontents of the self (Dostoyevski's pathologically voluble Underground Man), with acute mental distress (the hysterical narrator, deranged by injustice, of Multatuli's "Max Havelaar"). To natter on obsessively, repetitively, used to be invariably a resource of comedy. (Think of Shakespeare's plebeian grumblers, like the porter in "Macbeth"; think of Mr. Pickwick, among other inventions of Dickens'.) That comic use of garrulousness does not disappear. Joyce used garrulousness in a Rabelaisian spirit, as a vehicle of comic hyperbole, and Gertrude Stein, champion of verbose writing, turned the tics of egotism and sententiousness into a good-natured comic voice of great originality. But most of the verbose first-person narrators in the ambitious literature of this century have been radically misanthropic. Garrulousness is identified with the baleful, aggrieved repetitiveness of senility (Beckett's prose monologues that call themselves novels) and with paranoia and unslakable rage (the novels and plays of Thomas Bernhard). Who does not sense the despair behind the loquacious, sprightly musings of Robert Walser and the quirkily erudite, bantering voices in the stories of Donald Barthelme?

Beckett's narrators are usually trying, not altogether successfully, to imagine themselves as dead. Brás Cubas has no such problem. But then Machado de Assis was trying to be, and is, funny. There is nothing morbid about the consciousness of his posthumous narrator; on the contrary, the perspective of maximum consciousness —which is what, wittily, a posthumous narrator can claim—is a comic perspective. What Brás Cubas is writing from is not a true afterlife (it has no geography) but only another go at the idea of authorial detachment. The neo-Sternean narrative high jinks of these memoirs of a disappointed man do not issue from Sternean exuberance, or even from Sternean nervousness. They are a kind of antidote, a counterforce, to the narrator's despondency: a way of mastering dejection considerably more specialized than the "great cure, an anti-melancholy plaster, designed to relieve the despondency of mankind" which the narrator fantasizes about inventing. Life administers its hard lessons. But one can write as one pleases—a form of liberty.

Machado de Assis was only forty-one when he published these reminiscences of a man who has died at sixty-four, as we learn at the opening of the book. (Machado was born in 1839; he makes his creation Brás Cubas, the posthumous autobiographer, a full generation older, born in 1805.) The novel as an exercise in anticipating old age is a venture to which writers of a melancholy temperament continue to be drawn. I was in my late twenties when I wrote my first novel, "The Benefactor," which purports to be the reminiscences of a man then in his early sixties, a rentier, dilettante, and fantasist, who announces at the beginning of the book that he has reached a harbor of serenity where, all experience finished, he can look back on his life. The few conscious literary references in my head were mostly French—above all, "Candide" and Descartes's "Meditations." I thought I was writing a satire on optimism and on certain cherished (by me) ideas of the inner life and of a religiously nourished inwardness. (What was going on unconsciously is, as I think about it now, another story.) When I had the good fortune to have "The Benefactor" accepted by the first publisher to whom I submitted it—Farrar, Straus—I had the further good luck of having assigned to me as my editor Cecil Hemley, who in 1952, in his previous incarnation as the head of Noonday Press (recently acquired by my new publisher), had brought out the translation (by William L. Grossman) of Machado's novel that really launched the book's career in English. At our first meeting, Hemley said to me, not implausibly, "I can see you have been influenced by 'Epitaph of a Small Winner.' " Epitaph of a what? "By, you know, Machado de Assis." Who? He lent me his copy, and several days later I declared myself retroactively influenced.

Although I have since read a good deal of Machado in translation, this book—the first of his five last novels (he lived twenty-eight years after writing it), generally thought the summit of his genius—remains my favorite. It is, I am told, the one that non-Brazilians often prefer, although critics usually pick "Dom Casmurro" (1899). I am astonished that a writer of such greatness does not yet occupy the place he deserves. Up to a point, the relative neglect of Machado outside Brazil may be no more mysterious than the neglect of another prolific writer of genius whom Eurocentric notions of world literature have marginalized: Natsume Sōseki. Surely Machado would be better known if he hadn't been Brazilian and hadn't spent his whole life in Rio de Janeiro—if he were, say, Italian or Russian, or even Portuguese. But the impediment is not simply that Machado was not a European writer. Even more remarkable than his absence from the stage of world literature is that he has been very little known and read in the rest of Latin America—as if it were still hard to digest the fact that the greatest author ever produced in Latin America wrote in the Portuguese, rather than the Spanish, language. Brazil may be the continent's biggest country (and, in the nineteenth century, Rio its largest city), but it has always been the outsider country, regarded by the rest of South America—Hispanophone South America—with a good deal of condescension and even racism. A writer from one of those countries is far likelier to know any of the European literatures or literature in English than to know the literature of Brazil, whereas Brazilian writers are acutely aware of Spanish-American literature. Borges, the second-greatest writer produced on that continent, seems never to have read Machado de Assis. Indeed, Machado is even less well known to Spanish-language readers than to those who read him in English. "Epitaph of a Small Winner" was translated into Spanish only in the nineteen-sixties, some eighty years after it was written and a decade after it was translated (twice) into English.

With enough time, enough afterlife, a great book does find its rightful place. And perhaps some books need to be rediscovered again and again. "Epitaph of a Small Winner" (soon to be reissued by Farrar, Straus & Giroux

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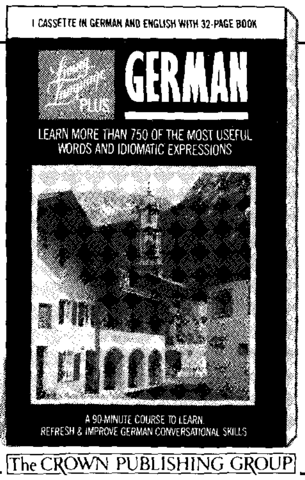
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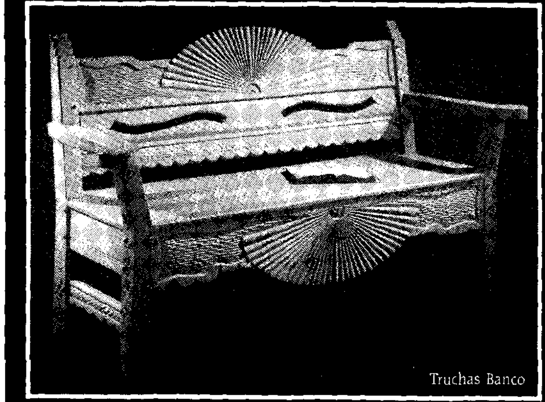

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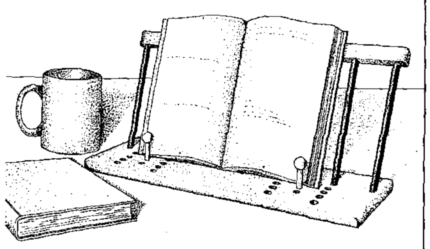
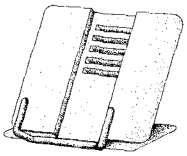
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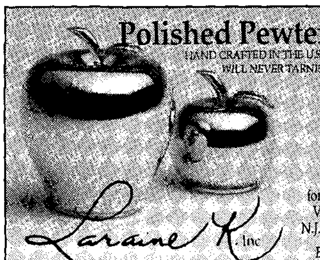
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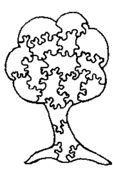
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after many years of being out of print) is probably one of those thrillingly original, radically skeptical books which will always impress readers with the force of a private discovery. It doesn't seem much of a compliment to say that this novel, written more than a century ago, seems—well, modern. Isn't every work that speaks to us with an originality and lucidity we're capable of acknowledging inevitably one that we then want to conscript into what we understand as modernity? Our standards of modernity are a system of flattering illusions, which permit us to selectively colonize the past, as are our ideas of what is provincial, which permit certain parts of the world to condescend to all the rest. Being dead may stand for a point of view that cannot be accused of being provincial. Surely "Epitaph of a Small Winner" is one of the most entertainingly unprovincial books ever written. And to love this book is to become a little less provincial about literature oneself.

—SUSAN SONTAG

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

THE BOOK OF EVIDENCE, by John Banville (Scribners; $17.95). An unusual novel, showing both verve and virtuosity, by an Irish writer whose several previous novels, though published in this country, seem to have attracted little attention. This one should make a difference. It opens, "My lord, when you ask me to tell the court in my own words, this is what I shall say." The speaker, we learn, is one Frederick Montgomery, thirty-odd, overweight, well born, a sponging drifter around the Mediterranean islands, who has returned home to Ireland and committed a serious crime. His story is sometimes self-serving but more often a struggle for exactitude, an attempt that is both explicit and trancelike. Mr. Banville's writing is admirable, and his vocabulary is (sardonically?) arresting: "balanic," "echolalia," "glair," "prelapsarian." Freddie ends his story, "Yes, an explorer, that's what I am, glimpsing a new continent from the prow of a sinking ship."

THE KNEELING BUS, by Beverly Coyle (Ticknor & Fields; $18.95). A gracefully written first novel about smart little Carrie, a Methodist min-

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ister's daughter who grows up in the slow-motion, pre-development world of Florida in the fifties, in a series of towns "sleepy and ringing with no sound at all." Carrie is obediently religious, but quietly rebels by applying her sharp eye and language to everyone around her, telling us that her father stands before his congregation as though he had just stepped out onto his front porch, and that her mother is shocked more by people's extravagances than by their secret lusts. Carrie herself occasionally fantasizes about being a missionary in Africa, but admits that when she searches her soul the only thing she is sure she wants in the future is a husband. Having interested us in Carrie's movement toward adulthood and away from spirituality, the author doesn't quite deliver: the book jumps abruptly at the end from Carrie's youthful observations to the musings of a grownup, divorced, independent woman whose coming-of-age we've missed.

NOTE: "The Rain Came Last & Other Stories," by Niccolò Tucci, has been published by New Directions ($22.95 cloth, $10.95 paper). Many of the stories originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

GENERAL

DRAWING THE LINE: THE KOREAN WAR, 1950-1953, by Richard Whelan (Little, Brown; $24.95). An intellectually sophisticated history in plain language. Mr. Whelan emphasizes the political and diplomatic aspects of the "police action," seeing it as both an effect and a cause of the Cold War that is now ending. His account of the actual fighting is accurate, though not detailed; his strength and originality lie in his portrayal of mutual misunderstanding. Because the United States had no particular stake in Korea, we failed to recognize its importance to its neighbors. The North Korean invasion of South Korea forced us to defend a country from which we had all but withdrawn and a government of which we disapproved, in order to demonstrate that the United Nations—unlike the League of Nations—would halt aggression. The war destroyed the State Department's hope of reaching an understanding with Red China, but it drew the Western

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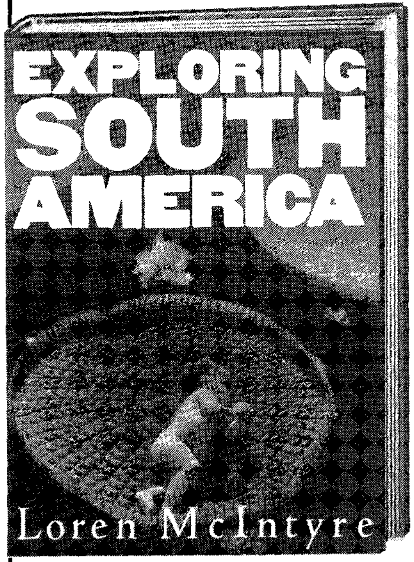

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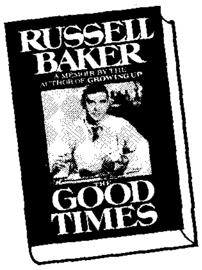

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alliance together and persuaded the West to rearm. MacArthur figures prominently in Mr. Whelan's account, his contribution to confusing our domestic politics almost as disastrous as his military misjudgment.

MY TRAITOR'S HEART, by Rian Malan (Atlantic Monthly; $19.95). "Take my hand, and let's fly like gods to where it happened." So the author, a troubled descendant of South Africa's founding Afrikaners, begins one of the many murder stories that compose this memoir. Mr. Malan relates family history, his childhood in a Johannesburg suburb and his rebellious-hipster adolescence, his brief career as a crime reporter, and the dissatisfactions of his attempt at a life in exile, but chiefly he draws the reader into his country's tales of violence and racial incomprehension, and leads us through all the strategies of evasion, exemption, and bitterness that he himself has tried out. "It's not just their skin that's white," he writes of his compatriots. "Their minds are white, too." The author casts himself as a traitor to this white mind by offering great draughts of unprecedented Afrikaner truthtelling, and by anticipating and exploring every white fear of the "parallel world" of black Africa, "a kingdom of unconquered consciousness." Although Mr. Malan's true-life tales are as ironic and uncanny as Isak Dinesen's stories, his voice ultimately offers no distractions and almost no consolation, and this book becomes an act of human patriotism in the face of evil choices.

DON'T TELL THE GROWN-UPS: SUBVERSIVE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, by Alison Lurie (Little, Brown; $19.95). Many readers will know of Lurie as a satirical and worldly novelist; here she brings those qualities to essays on what can loosely be called children's literature (including skipping and clapping rhymes, and adult fantasy fiction). She sees works as metaphors for their authors' lives: "*Peter Pan* is an allegory of Barrie's relations with the Davies family," five boys whom he informally adopted at the death of their father, and whose mother became his Wendy; the pie fought over in "A Apple Pie" is John Ruskin, for whom Kate Greenaway suffered unrequited love. Lurie is also likely to see stories as being about their own process of creation, and she makes a parallel between E. Nesbit and her "Five Children," who first use magic "in a casual, materialistic way," as Nesbit wrote to "pay the bills; only much later did she come to respect her gift." The comparisons can seem glib, but often only because they are so provocative. If this makes one wish for a single, book-length analysis, one is not unhappy to settle for mere scholarship, drama, and wit.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN: ITALY, 1954, by Ann Cornelisen (Dutton; $18.95). In April, 1954, the author, an American in her twenties, went to Florence, planning to learn Italian before beginning graduate work in classical archeology in Rome. She has lived in Italy ever since and has written several notable books, but not about archeology. Her gentle, vivid recollections portray several strangers (eccentric landladies, a perfectionist tutor) whose kindness eased her way in a foreign country. They are a diverting prelude to the woman who changed her life, Giovanna Guzzeloni Thompson, the representative in Italy for the British Save the Children Fund. The author accepted an invitation from Mrs. Thompson—the friend of a friend—to observe her work in Ortona, a poverty-stricken village in the mountains above the Adriatic. Ms. Cornelisen's visit stretched from days to months as she became involved in the struggles of a destitute population at once endearing and alien. The reader feels that nothing is exaggerated or sentimentalized—that the author's veracity, like her prose, is impeccable. It's a lovely, affecting book.

NOTE: "A Miracle, a Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers," by Lawrence Weschler, has been published by Pantheon ($22.95). Nearly all the contents first appeared in these pages.

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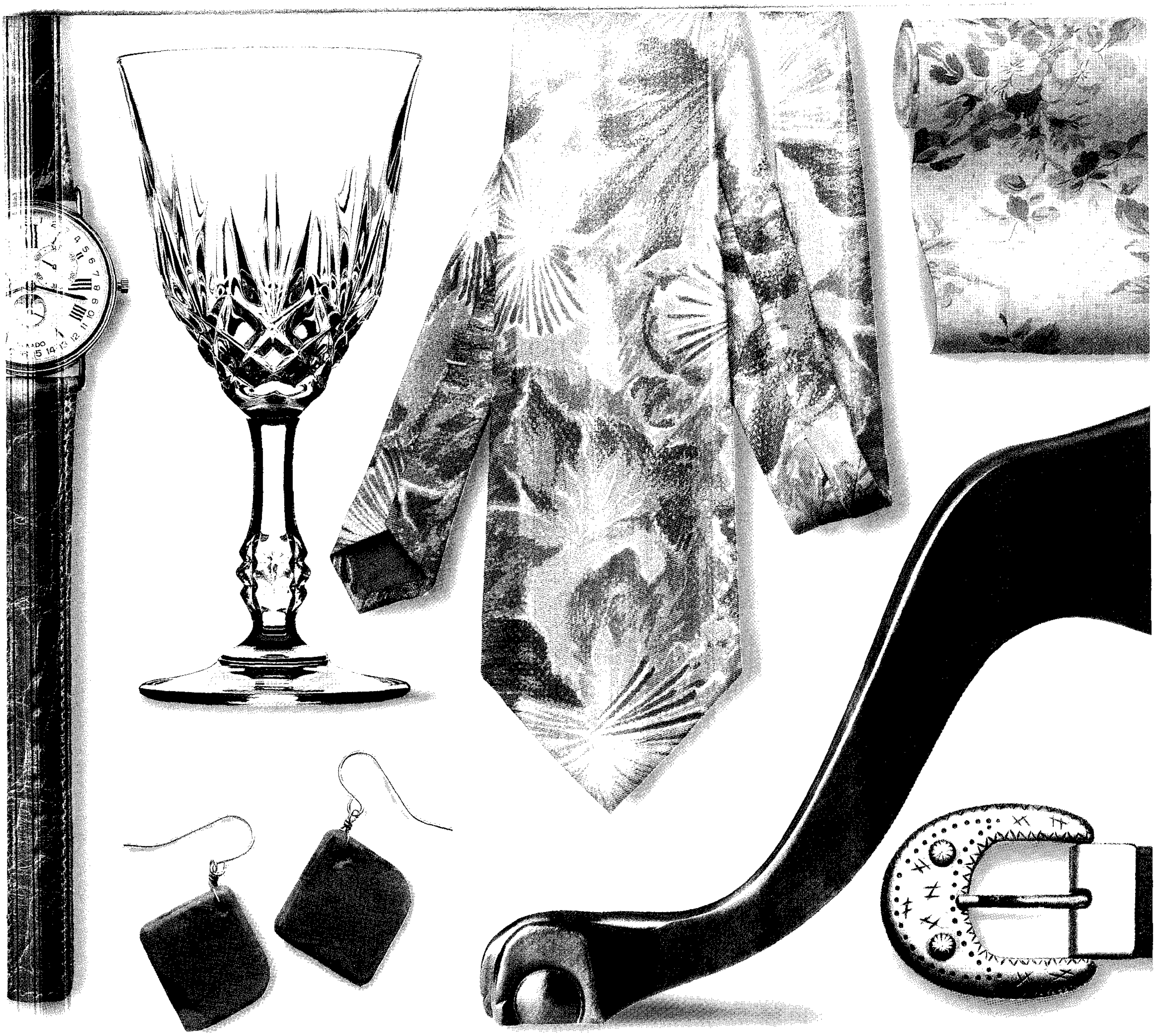

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